

Edited by Oliver Bange and Poul Villaume



# THE LONG DÉTENTE

Changing Concepts of Security and  
Cooperation in Europe, 1950s–1980s



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## **The Long Détente**



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Cooperation in Europe, 1950s–1980s**

*Edited by*

**Oliver Bange and Poul Villaume**



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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

|        |                                                                                                                                              |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AAN:   | Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Archives of Modern Records)                                                                                     |
| AAPD:  | Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland                                                                                 |
| ABM:   | Anti-Ballistic Missile                                                                                                                       |
| ACDA:  | Arms Control and Disarmaments Agency                                                                                                         |
| ACS:   | Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Central State Archive of Italy)                                                                               |
| AdsD:  | Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn                                                                               |
| ALCMs: | Air-Launched Cruise Missiles                                                                                                                 |
| ALCOA: | Aluminium Company of America                                                                                                                 |
| APAG:  | Atlantic Policy Advisory Group                                                                                                               |
| ARMCO: | The American Rolling Mill Company                                                                                                            |
| AUP:   | Archiv der Universität Potsdam (Archive of the University of Potsdam)                                                                        |
| BA:    | Bundesarchiv                                                                                                                                 |
| BAB:   | Bundesarchiv Berlin (Federal German Archives, Berlin-Lichterfelde)                                                                           |
| BAK:   | Bundesarchiv Koblenz (Federal German Archives, Koblenz)                                                                                      |
| BdL:   | Büro der Leitung (Head Office of MfS)                                                                                                        |
| BIOst: | Bundesinstitut für osteuropäische und internationale Studien (Federal German Institute for East European and International Studies, Cologne) |
| BND:   | Bundesnachrichtendienst (Federal German Intelligence Service)                                                                                |
| BStU:  | Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR (Stasi Records Archive)                            |
| CBM:   | Confidence Building Measure                                                                                                                  |

|            |                                                                         |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CC:        | Central Committee                                                       |
| CDE:       | Conference on Disarmament in Europe                                     |
| CDU:       | Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands, Christian Democratic Union |
| CFE:       | Conventional Forces in Europe (conference and treaty on)                |
| CHCW:      | <i>The Cambridge History of the Cold War</i>                            |
| CHD:       | Conference on the Human Dimension                                       |
| CIA:       | Central Intelligence Agency                                             |
| CIEP:      | Council on International Economic Policy                                |
| CMEA:      | Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon)                        |
| CNN:       | Cable News Network                                                      |
| COCOM:     | Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls                 |
| COMBALTAP: | Commander Allied Forces Baltic Approaches                               |
| CPSU:      | Communist Party of the Soviet Union                                     |
| CSBM:      | Confidence- and Security-Building Measures                              |
| CSCE:      | Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe                        |
| CSSR:      | Czechoslovak Socialist Republic                                         |
| CSU:       | Christlich-Soziale Union (Christian-Social Union in FRG)                |
| CWIHP:     | Cold War International History Project                                  |
| DA:        | Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening (Danish Employers' Association)              |
| DC:        | Democrazia Christiana (Italian Christian Democracy Party)               |
| DDR:       | Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic)            |
| DEN:       | Denmark                                                                 |
| DKP:       | Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti (Danish Communist Party)                   |
| DSA:       | Danish State Archives (Rigsarkivet)                                     |
| DUF:       | Dansk Ungdoms Forum (Danish Youth Forum)                                |
| EB:        | Depositum Egon Bahr                                                     |
| EC:        | European Communities                                                    |
| ECSC:      | European Coal and Steel Community                                       |
| EDC:       | European Disarmament Conference                                         |
| EEC:       | European Economic Community                                             |
| END:       | European Nuclear Disarmament (Campaign)                                 |
| ENI:       | Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (Italy's national hydrocarbons agency)       |
| EPC:       | European Policy Cooperation                                             |
| ESC:       | European Security Conference                                            |
| EU:        | European Union                                                          |
| EUR:       | State Department Bureau of European Affairs                             |

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|          |                                                                                                                                              |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Eurosud: | Association of Socialist Parties from South-West Europe (France, Spain, Italy, Portugal)                                                     |
| EXIM:    | Export-Import Bank of the US                                                                                                                 |
| FBS:     | Forward Based Systems                                                                                                                        |
| FDP:     | Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party, FRG)                                                                                      |
| FES:     | Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung                                                                                                                     |
| FMA:     | Foreign Ministry Archives                                                                                                                    |
| FPC:     | Danish Parliamentary Foreign Policy Committee (Udenrigspolitisk Nævn)                                                                        |
| FRG:     | Federal Republic of Germany                                                                                                                  |
| FRUS:    | Foreign Relations of the United States                                                                                                       |
| GARF:    | Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation)                                                       |
| GATT:    | General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade                                                                                                       |
| GDP:     | Gross Domestic Product                                                                                                                       |
| GDR:     | German Democratic Republic                                                                                                                   |
| GFL:     | Gerald Ford Presidential Library                                                                                                             |
| HSWP:    | Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party                                                                                                           |
| HVA:     | Foreign Intelligence Department of East German Stasi                                                                                         |
| ICBM:    | Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles                                                                                                          |
| IFSH:    | Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg (Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, Hamburg) |
| IGAT-2:  | Iranian Gas Transmission deal                                                                                                                |
| IIB:     | Institut für Internationale Beziehungen (Institute for International Relations, Potsdam)                                                     |
| IIP:     | International Institute for Peace, Vienna                                                                                                    |
| IISS:    | International Institute for Strategic Studies, London                                                                                        |
| IM:      | Informeller Mitarbeiter (informant and collaborator of MfS)                                                                                  |
| INF:     | Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces                                                                                                            |
| INR:     | Bureau of Intelligence and Research of U.S. State Department                                                                                 |
| IPW:     | Institut für Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft (Institute for International Politics and Economics, Potsdam)                             |
| IRI:     | Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (Institute for Industrial Reconstruction)                                                          |
| JCL:     | Jimmy Carter Presidential Library                                                                                                            |
| KGB:     | Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti (Soviet Committee for State Security)                                                                   |
| LBJ:     | Lyndon Baines Johnson                                                                                                                        |

|            |                                                                                                   |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LO:        | Landsorganisationen (Danish National Association of Trade Unions)                                 |
| LoC:       | Library of Congress                                                                               |
| LSE:       | London School of Economics and Political Science                                                  |
| MAD:       | Mutually Assured Destruction                                                                      |
| MAE:       | Ministerul Afacerilor Externe (Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs)                              |
| MAEF:      | Mérite Artistique Européen France (European Artistic Merit, France)                               |
| MAN:       | Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nürnberg (West German engine- and motor company)                         |
| MBFR:      | Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions                                                              |
| MfAA:      | Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (GDR Ministry for Foreign Affairs)                     |
| MFN:       | Most Favored Nation                                                                               |
| MfS:       | Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Ministry for State Security -Stasi)                             |
| MHS:       | Minnesota Historical Society                                                                      |
| MID:       | Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del (Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs)                                |
| MIEC:      | Moscow International Economic Conference                                                          |
| MIRV:      | Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles                                                |
| M-KS:      | Congressional writings of the HSWP                                                                |
| MOL:       | Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archives)                                            |
| MPT:       | Multilateral Preparatory Talks (for CSCE in 1972)                                                 |
| N+N (NNA): | Neutral and Nonaligned Countries                                                                  |
| NARA:      | National Archives and Record Administration (United States)                                       |
| NATO:      | North Atlantic Treaty Organization <i>or</i> NATO Archives Brussels                               |
| NAUK:      | National Archives of the United Kingdom                                                           |
| NIE:       | National Intelligence Estimate                                                                    |
| NO/ARBAK:  | Arbeiderbevegelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek (Archive and Library of the Labour Movement, Norway)       |
| NPT:       | Non-Proliferation Treaty                                                                          |
| NSAM:      | National Security Action Memorandum                                                               |
| NSArch:    | National Security Archive                                                                         |
| NSC:       | National Security Council                                                                         |
| PA AA:     | Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (Political Archive of the Federal German Foreign Office) |

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|            |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PASOK:     | Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima (Greek Labor Party)                                                                                                                              |
| PCC:       | Political Consultative Committee                                                                                                                                                |
| PCE:       | Partido Comunista de España (Communist Party of Spain)                                                                                                                          |
| PCI:       | Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party)                                                                                                                            |
| PEN:       | Worldwide Association of Writers                                                                                                                                                |
| PFIAB:     | President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board                                                                                                                                 |
| PID:       | Politisch-ideologische Diversion (Political-Ideological Diversion)                                                                                                              |
| PSDI:      | Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano (Italian Democratic Socialist Party)                                                                                                    |
| PSI:       | Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party)                                                                                                                           |
| PSOE:      | Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party)                                                                                                            |
| PvdA:      | Partij van de Arbeid (Dutch Labor Party)                                                                                                                                        |
| RAC:       | Remote Archival Capture                                                                                                                                                         |
| RFE:       | Radio Free Europe                                                                                                                                                               |
| RGASPI:    | Rossiiskii Gosndarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (The Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History)                                                       |
| RL:        | Radio Liberty                                                                                                                                                                   |
| SALT:      | Strategic Arms Limitation Talks                                                                                                                                                 |
| SAMAK:     | Arbejderbevægelsens nordiske samarbejdskomité (Cooperation Committee of the Nordic Social Democratic Labour Parties)                                                            |
| SAP:       | Socialdemokratiska Arbetarparti (Social Democratic Labor Party, Sweden)                                                                                                         |
| SAPMO:     | Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the Federal German Archives) |
| Scandilux: | Association of Social Democratic Parties from the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark with observers from Germany, France, and Great Britain          |
| SDI:       | Strategic Defense Initiative                                                                                                                                                    |
| SDS:       | Social Democratic Party of Great Britain                                                                                                                                        |
| SED:       | Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party, GDR)                                                                                                         |
| SI:        | Socialist International                                                                                                                                                         |

|             |                                                                                                      |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SIDAC:      | Socialist International Advisory Council on Disarmament and Arms Control                             |
| SIPRI:      | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute                                                     |
| SLBM:       | Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile                                                                 |
| SNE:        | Sojuznefteexport                                                                                     |
| SPD:        | Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland (Social Democratic Party, FRG)                                |
| START:      | Strategic Arms Reduction Talks                                                                       |
| Stasi:      | Staatssicherheit (Ministry for State Security (MfS), GDR)                                            |
| SWE/ARBARK: | Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek (Archive and Library of the Labor Movement, Sweden)             |
| SWP:        | Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Federal German Foundation for Science and Politics)               |
| TNFs:       | (European) Theater Nuclear Forces                                                                    |
| TNT:        | Trinitrotoluene (explosive)                                                                          |
| UKNA:       | United Kingdom National Archives                                                                     |
| UN:         | United Nations                                                                                       |
| UNCTAD:     | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development                                                   |
| UNESCO:     | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization                                     |
| USA:        | United States of America                                                                             |
| USNA:       | United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)                                    |
| USSR:       | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics                                                                  |
| WBA:        | Willy Brandt Archiv                                                                                  |
| WP/WTO:     | Warsaw Pact/Warsaw Treaty Organization                                                               |
| ZAIG:       | Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe (Central Group for Analysis and Information of the MfS) |
| ZK:         | Zentralkomitee (executive body of SED)                                                               |
| ZKG:        | Zentrale Koordinierungsgruppe (Central Coordination Group of MfS)                                    |

# Introduction

*Oliver Bange and Poul Villaume*

## Research and Controversies

“Détente”—a term that describes the antagonistic cooperation<sup>1</sup> between the capitalist-liberal states of the West and the communist-ruled countries of the Warsaw Pact—has become something of a swearword and even, as it seems, a taboo topic in international and especially Anglo-American mainstream historiography of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> To concede that détente had a substantial stake in the outcome of the conflict between East and West appears to many younger scholars to be an unnecessary move that may jeopardize their academic career. At best, European scholars writing in Anglo-American publications such as the recent *Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* deal away with détente in a sentence or a paragraph, sometimes almost unwillingly admitting its “unintended consequences for the Eastern bloc.”<sup>3</sup> At worst, détente and with it an entire influential era of that momentous conflict between societal systems is hardly mentioned at all.

This was the case with the otherwise highly detailed CNN webpage on the Cold War. It mentioned Willy Brandt only once, as West Berlin’s mayor in 1961, the year the Berlin Wall was built, and not once as West

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<sup>1</sup> For the term, see Link, *Der Ost-West-Konflikt*. See also the debate amongst historians in the 1990s on the methodological value of Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative acting. Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*. Müller, “Internationale Beziehungen”; Habermas, “Entgegnung.”

<sup>2</sup> A notable exception is the two works by Loth, *Overcoming the Cold War*; the same, “Was war der Kalte Krieg?” Remarkably, neither publication was included in the list of Loth’s publications, edited by Bachem-Rehm, Hiepel and Türk, *Teilungen überwinden*.

<sup>3</sup> Etges, “Western Europe,” devotes one sentence (169), Stöver, “Eastern Europe,” (178f) one paragraph to détente.

Germany's chancellor and the proponent for Ostpolitik and global détente in the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Similar narratives are offered by John Lewis Gaddis, Melvyn P. Leffler, and Archie Brown, who simply fail to deal with détente in their longish overviews of the Cold War.<sup>5</sup> In the 2008 edition of his popular Cold War narrative, Walter LaFeber treats détente as an exclusive superpower affair. Although he states that with the Helsinki Accords (1975) the "stage was being set for the USSR's later collapse," he devotes only ten lines out of 450 pages to this "stage."<sup>6</sup> Because détente—or "peaceful coexistence" as it was dubbed by the Warsaw Pact countries—owed much of its effectiveness to efforts by Europeans, it is regrettable that recently even European authors have come to draw on this rather selective narrative. An example of the European adaptation of this predominantly American narrative is Bernd Stöver; in his writings he constructs a continued U.S. liberation strategy from 1947 until 1991, either completely ignoring East-West cooperation as initiated in the 1970s, or dealing with it in an en passant fashion, by and large unconnected with the rest of his narrative.<sup>7</sup> It is only in this way that the authors construct a continuity of America's policy toward the Warsaw Pact and its strategy of anti-communism. While this continuity did not exist in history,<sup>8</sup> its construction in historiography makes possible Gaddis's claim for an American "victory" in the Cold War.

<sup>4</sup> See the review of the CNN webpage on <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/id=22&type=rezwww>. This was somewhat corrected by episode no. 17 of the CNN Cold War Series on TV (now also available on YouTube) which was actually devoted to "Détente, 1969–1975." Here, proponents of an East-West détente Egon Bahr, Anatoly Dobrynin, and Gerald Ford explain their governments' expectations and perceptions in this era.

<sup>5</sup> Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*, simply leaps over the years 1965 to 1975. Gaddis, *The Cold War*. Gaddis concedes 20 pages to détente, which he interprets as a policy aimed at maintaining the existing status quo, only to pursue with a detailed description of events after 1979. Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*, portrays the Brezhnev-period as an „era of stagnation," whose main feature was that it allowed Western challenges to grow. This is probably the reason why the détente period is dealt with on a mere 30 pages.

<sup>6</sup> LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War*, 297f. In their recent, otherwise highly critical, revisionist outline of U.S. policies in the Cold War (350 pages out of 600), Oliver Stone and Peter Kuzniak do not mention détente at all. They do claim, albeit incorrectly, that "Brezhnev and Nixon initiated the process that resulted in the Helsinki Accords" (Stone and Kuzniak, *The Untold Story*, 379).

<sup>7</sup> Stöver, *Die Befreiung vom Kommunismus*; the same, *Der Kalte Krieg*. Stöver's works are particularly lauded for their attempt to construct a cultural history of the conflict between East and West.

<sup>8</sup> On this, see Bange, "Die USA." See also Kieninger, "Transformation versus Status Quo."



If, however, the era of détente reached well beyond 1975, it becomes apparent that East-West contacts did not only survive their alleged “breakdown” in the late 1970s, but remained an influential factor throughout the entire Reagan era: as an element furthering stability and pan-European security, and an important impetus for the increasing dynamics of transformation within communist societies. In view of this it seems utterly inapt to label the years between 1981 and 1985 a “second Cold War.”<sup>9</sup> Thanks primarily to the efforts of the Europeans there was simply no relapse into the political, economic and communicative autism of the early 1950s. The term “second Cold War” in itself is a giveaway that signals (against the intentions of its inventors) that there must have existed a period without a Cold War before. The term “Cold War” in fact made a reappearance only in the Reagan years, and even then European publics and politics remained hesitant to refer to it.<sup>10</sup> This is one reason why a number of European historians have repeatedly argued against the term and its indiscriminate usage for the entire period of the East-West conflict.<sup>11</sup>

When détente is mentioned at all in these examples of the established narrative, it is often connected to a mere assumption of the “end of détente,”<sup>12</sup> at the latest by 1979/80. The narrative then continues with the more confrontational policies of the early Reagan era and how these contributed to the end of the Cold War and the proclaimed victory of the West.<sup>13</sup> In this geopolitical chronology of the twentieth century the “sec-

---

<sup>9</sup> See Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*. This term is also used in Leopoldo Nuti’s introduction to the volume he edited, *The Crisis of Détente in Europe*. Nuti talks about a “return of the Cold War.” Without further considerations, the term is then also used by Gassert, Geiger, and Wentker, *Zweiter Kalter Krieg*. Heiner Bröckermann, while referring to the term, also notices a “German-German *Sonderweg*” (special course) during those years. Bröckermann, *Landesverteidigung und Militarisierung*.

<sup>10</sup> See the chapter by Gottfried Niedhart in this volume. See also Villaume and Westad, “Introduction.”

<sup>11</sup> For a fundamental critique of the term, its usage and intended meanings, see Niedhart, “Der Ost-West Konflikt,” particularly 588–94. A similar argument is put forward by Di Nolfo, “Der Kalte Krieg”; Link, *Der Ost-West-Konflikt*. All these authors apply the term Cold War only to the years between 1947 and 1955. For a detailed analysis of this debate with a comprehensive list of literature, see Niedhart’s article in the *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, University of California Davis, *Cold War World/America*, Lesson 5: The end of the Cold War 1, <http://chssp.ucdavis.edu/programs/historyblueprint/CWAW5EndoftheColdWar.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Although due credit is given to Gorbachev, this is also basically the narrative in the much-acclaimed recent volume by Wilson, *The Triumph of Improvisation*; characteristically, the

ond Cold War” neatly lines up with the origins of World War I, the inter-war period, World War II, the transition into the Cold War, the “high” Cold War, détente (if mentioned); only to be superseded by the endgame of the Cold War and possibly another Cold War on the horizons.

However, over the past decade or so numerous new and important elements have been added to our interpretation and understanding of the systemic conflict between East and West. Particularly Odd Arne Westad and many of his students at the LSE have consistently pointed to the “Cold War in the Third World.”<sup>14</sup> Others have shifted our focus on the “Helsinki effect” and human rights activism,<sup>15</sup> opposition movements or economic globalization,<sup>16</sup> the role of East-Central Europe, or the impact of the German problem.<sup>17</sup>

None of this, however, can answer the key question of the established geopolitical narrative: If the “breakdown of détente” gave way to a “Second Cold War”—how and why would this deterioration in East-West relations and between the superpowers in particular have led to a peaceful end of the conflict only a few years later? Part of the answer—and arguably the most important part—is the interconnection between the ideological and societal core of the East-West conflict and the dual modes of dealing with it. Throughout the period between 1945 and 1990 these two modes existed in parallel to each other, but were pursued by different actors with varying degrees of intensity at different times.

One mode was looking for a cooperative and engaging way of conducting the competition between the two adverse societal systems. The other one consisted of a more confrontational approach at waging the conflict, often involving the military and economics.<sup>18</sup> Détente, *Ostpolitik*,

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), mentioned only *en passant*, is referred to throughout as “the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.”

<sup>14</sup> Westad, *The Global Cold War*; Kwon, *The Other Cold War*; Kalinovsky and Radchenko, *The End of the Cold War*.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect*; Snyder, *Human Rights*; Iriye et al., *The Human Rights Revolution*; Jensen, “Negotiating Universality”; Mariager, Molin and Brathagen, *Human Rights in Europe*; Villaume, Mariager, and Porsdam, *The Long 1970s*.

<sup>16</sup> Suri, *Power and Protest*; Klimke, *The Other Alliance*; Della Porta, *Globalization from Below*.

<sup>17</sup> Several proponents of these last two arguments contributed to the volume by Kramer and Smetana, *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open*. See contributions in Bozo et al., *Visions of the End of the Cold War*, as well as in Bozo et al., *Europe and the End of the Cold War*.

<sup>18</sup> British historian Geoffrey Roberts has recently argued that even Vyacheslav Molotov, Soviet foreign minister during and immediately after the Stalin era, while indeed being

bridge-building, and all other kinds of transformation policies (aiming at the “transformation of the other side,” as Willy Brandt put it in a public speech in 1962) clearly fall into the first category. Yet, even in the détente era, confrontational aspects and policies remained. A meaningful military détente did not come about during the 1970s, but emerged only in the mid-1980s.<sup>19</sup> Also, even during times of immense confrontation in the late 1950s and early 1960s, numerous unofficial contacts and even personal friendships between high-ranking representatives and ordinary citizens were maintained across the Iron Curtain.<sup>20</sup>

Projected into the early 1980s, this meant that the apparent and increasing deterioration of the diplomatic process between the two superpowers was and almost had to be compensated for by the small- and medium-sized European powers. This was often done in the form of unofficial or personal contacts, in the form of seemingly un-political exchanges like in trade and economics, and these continued contacts—which often intensified in the wake of the superpower misalignment—had to be shielded from the respective superpower itself. In this way, the lack of superpower leadership beyond mere rhetorical, political, military, and economic confrontation facilitated the intensification of secret German-German contacts, and helped the Franco-West German initiatives at the CSCE level (triggering further anxieties among Stasi personnel over the likely repercussions in East German society). Moreover, it provided room for CSCE initiatives of the smaller European powers (those who could not initiate or sustain a summit diplomacy, like Denmark, Switzerland, or Austria), and it provided extra-state initiatives with an important leverage (like the Palme Commission and the party-level contacts between Western social democrats and Eastern communists). In this respect, the serious crisis in détente diplomacy in the early 1980s and the hype of semi-official activities between the blocs in Europe bred on each other. Scare, sensation, and scandalisation are part of the academic and publishing game on the so-called “second Cold War”: How close to a regional or

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“Stalin’s Cold Warrior” also pursued peaceful coexistence with the West and campaigned for a pan-European system of collective security, thus in some ways anticipating the European détente process of the 1970s; see his *Molotov: Stalin’s Cold Warrior*. On other early Soviet détente ventures, see Mikhail Lipkin’s chapter in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> On NATO analyses of prospects of détente in the late 1960s, see chapter 9 in Hatzivasiliou, *NATO and Western Perceptions*.

<sup>20</sup> On the last point, see, for example, Autio-Sarasmo and Humphreys, *Winter Kept Us Warm*; Autio-Sarasmo and Miklossy, *Reassessing Cold War Europe*; Villaume, Eken-gren and Mariager, *Northern Europe in the Cold War*.

nuclear war was party x or z at any given time? How subversive and morally corrupt were the secret tactics and strategies employed?<sup>21</sup> The European perspective on the early 1980s has to be a rather different one.

### **Pieces of a Puzzle**

This volume presents a collection of pieces of evidence, which—taken together—lead to an argument that goes against the grain of the established narrative. This is the argument that a “long détente” existed between East and West, that it existed and lasted for good (economic, national security, societal) reasons, and that it had a profound impact on the eventual outcome of the conflict between East and West and the quintessentially peaceful framework in which this “endgame” was played.

The volume aims at offering new, Euro-centered narratives, including both West and East European perspectives. Combined, these contributions point to critical inconsistencies and inherent problems in the traditional U.S.-dominated narrative of the “victory in the Cold War.” This is not to say that this American narrative needs to be replaced by our argument over a “long détente”; rather, the ruling narrative can and needs to be augmented with the plentitude of European experiences and perceptions. After all, it was Europe—its peoples, societies, and states—that stood both at the ideological and military frontline of the conflict between East and West, and it was here that the struggle between liberalism and communism was eventually decided. In as much the contributions of this volume, both separately but particularly in conjunction, do indeed provide ample “food for thought” over how these European lines of thought contradict, change, or add to the existing narrative.

However, the interpretations and perspectives presented in the book do not and should not necessarily fit neatly together. In more than one way, this is work in progress: For the first time, the volume presents a collection of research results that appear to contradict the ruling narrative or at least many of the interpretations resulting from an exclusive focus on the

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<sup>21</sup> A prominent example of this historiographical presentation of apparent, though often misconstrued acute war scares is the often sensationalized ABLE ARCHER, a NATO exercise conducted in 1983. For the polarized historiographical debate on this, see, for example, Kramer, “Die Nicht-Krise”; Schild, 1983; a balanced and contextualized treatment is found in Adamsky, “The 1983 Nuclear Crisis.” Numerous documents on the perception in the United States have been released and can be found on the website of the National Security Archive (<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ablearcher/>).

superpowers. The contributions have in common that they deal with aspects of a meaningful East-West interaction, that they do not confine détente to the early 1970s, and that they widen our understanding of détente to a variety of societal, economic, political, ideological aspects. How these aspects relate to each other and how they relate to superpower diplomacy is a question that needs to be addressed at a later and more progressed stage of research.

“Ideology” and “peaceful coexistence” (the Eastern term for détente or Ostpolitik or bridge-building) constitute key concepts for all contributions in this volume, albeit in different intensity and with different meanings and contexts. It is worth mentioning that a major drive for détente did originally come from the East—although it could be said that in the end, the East did indeed become the victim of détente. Several of the contributions deal with a large variety of ideological aspects, so far not present in the dominating narrative—such as Eurocommunism, the Stasi’s battle against Western influences in culture and society, or intra-German contacts. And it was this specific trans-bloc and cross-bloc quality of the political, military, economic, and societal framework created by “peaceful coexistence” or détente in the 1970s which stood forth in such a stark contrast to the Cold War of the 1950s and early 1960s. Even U.S. presidents now no longer had to “communicate” with their Soviet counterparts by moving missiles or troops, as John F. Kennedy did in the Berlin and Cuban crises. East-West politics created a new and lasting framework for multilevel interactions. This did not, however, supersede the underlying societal conflict. Instead, it resulted in a kind of antagonistic cooperation, in which both sides remained fully aware that besides all the benefits resulting from this arrangement for both blocs, the other side was still determined to prevail in the contest of ideas and identities.

It was this antagonistic, yet in a military sense by and large peace-maintaining framework which European politicians and their respective publics alike (particularly in the frontline-states of both blocs) set out to protect and strengthen at times when superpower relations soured. The end of the East-West conflict owed much to the prolongation of this specific trans-bloc, trans-societal, and trans-ideological framework. Hence, however fractured the themes of the following chapters might appear, the volume presents a Euro-centered perspective, or rather a range of European perspectives. Because a similar framework and comparable development did not exist on a global or even a regional scale elsewhere, numerous “proxy-wars” between the superpowers and their allies spread beyond Europe and North America, resulting in enormous bloodshed

throughout the period covered. Many of the authors in this book have published elsewhere on these issues. It should be noted, however, that the “Global Cold War” is not the topic of this volume; détente originated and took place in Europe, because it was here that a “hot Cold War” would have acquired global and nuclear dimensions.

The question whether the United States was a leader or a follower in pursuing European or global détente is touched upon by several, if not most contributions in the volume. The answers seem to depend on a whole variety of variables: the specific period within the forty-five years covered, the actors, their perspectives and expectations and, last but not least, their understanding of what détente would and should actually mean. This of course also determines the approach and judgement of historical researchers and their readers alike. The volume as a whole represents a number of alternative interpretations on specific issues and themes as compared to the dominant interpretation in U.S. Cold War historiography, focusing predominantly if not exclusively on superpower relations and projections. Yet neither the authors nor the editors pretend to be able to provide a definite alternative narrative. Instead, the findings presented in this volume should be taken as pieces of a much larger puzzle that will need much more time and research to be fully understood and appreciated in its overall complexity.

We are confident that more and more pieces of this 4-D puzzle will first be researched and then inserted into academic and hopefully also public discourse in the not so distant future: “*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas!*”<sup>22</sup>

## Themes and Topics

### *Part I: Long Perspectives on Détente*

In the first chapter of the book, Gottfried Niedhart opens the debate on the nature and the stages of the conflict between the antagonistic societal systems of the West and the East. His starting point is the observation that historians usually feel free to use the term Cold War in different ways. They use it as a label for the whole period between 1946/47 and 1989/90. As such Cold War is a synonym for the East-West conflict. However, the same authors habitually distinguish between different phases of the con-

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<sup>22</sup> Vergil, *Georgica*, Book 2, 490.

flict and use the notion Cold War also for shorter periods that were interrupted by a period of détente. According to this view a second Cold War seems to have emerged after the breakdown of détente in the late 1970s. In his chapter Niedhart overcomes this terminological confusion and argues in favor of a periodization that differs from the conventional approach. It pleads for the term East-West conflict as a more suitable label for the international history between the end of World War II and the dissolution of the Soviet empire. Further, the chapter argues that the notion ‘Cold War’ should be reserved for the period between 1946/47 and 1962/63. The Cold War is interpreted as a special mode of conflict in the history of East-West relations, which was followed by a long détente. Détente was a period of antagonistic cooperation. Regardless of various tensions it secured peaceful coexistence and transformed the East-West conflict in such a profound way that there simply could be no “second” Cold War in its 1940s and 1950s form.

In the next chapter, Csaba Békés offers a novel interpretation of the détente process, arguing that emerging from 1953, détente was uninterruptedly a dominant feature of East-West relations until the end of the Cold War era in 1991. Békés identifies détente as a *new model of superpower coexistence* based on interdependence and compelled cooperation of the two parties characteristic of the second phase of the Cold War after 1953 aimed to avoid a direct military clash and a subsequent thermonuclear third world war at any price. It worked as a mechanism to control and determine the actions of the political leaders on both sides. While confrontational rhetoric indeed reemerged between 1979 and 1985, the Soviet leadership insisted on the preservation of the results of détente. This was also the first time that in a period of confrontation America’s European allies did not support Washington in seemingly united front. Equally, the countries of the Soviet bloc—driven by their special interests and utilizing their increasing independence from Moscow—also sought to uphold the economic and political advantages obtained since the advent of détente. Paradoxically, all this contributed to the gradual establishment of a *common European consciousness* that had been emerging since the mid-1960s.

## ***Part II: East-West Trade***

In his contribution, Mikhail Lipkin draws attention to the fact that both the political leadership of the USSR and its economic experts entertained an ongoing interest in economic cooperation with the West and particularly

with the United States, and that these concepts can be traced back to Soviet economic diplomacy in the immediate postwar period. The case study presented by Lipkin on Soviet motives to stage the Moscow International Economic Conference in 1952 allows for important insights into the complex economic and political calculations of the late Stalin era. Somewhat surprising, it was then—and not in the much famed address by Nikita Khrushchev to the Geneva Conference three years later—that the term “peaceful coexistence” was introduced as the mantra of Soviet policies toward the West. Arguing from a variety of previously unused Soviet primary sources, Lipkin concludes that this appears to have been more than a strategy of merely counteracting the deepening economic integration of Western Europe, the Bonn Treaty, or the Marshall Plan. It was also a venture displaying a profound interest in large-scale economic and possibly political cooperation in Europe across and between the different societal systems.

Werner Lippert’s chapter caters to the central argument of this book—the question of a “long détente”—by focusing on economic diplomacy between East and West and the key role which trade and economic ties had in perpetuating détente policies despite recurring political or military crises. The argument here is that significant and lasting East-West economic cooperation began in the early 1960s. Thus Lippert continues the story set out by Lipkin, albeit from a predominantly American and German angle. Vague and sometimes conflicting concepts of détente, however, encouraged West Europeans to seek closer economic interactions with the East, facilitating a strengthening of West European–Soviet relations that survived the political turmoil of the 1970s and 1980s. The United States did not manage to articulate clear expectations on East-West trade and failed to establish a lasting economic relationship with the Soviet Union that would withstand political crises. Consequently, it was mostly West European ties to the Soviet Union that would outlive the political ups and downs of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, making it truly a long détente.

### ***Part III: The Inextractability of External and Domestic Security***

By examining the goals and tactics of East Germany’s infamous Ministry for State Security—or Stasi, as it became known since 1989—Oliver Bange provides evidence on how a prolonged détente impacted on the societies under communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe. Thus the Stasi files of the early 1980s give the impression that détente was neither



dead nor breaking down, but instead an ever increasing menace to the “socialist” society in the GDR and to the SED’s party rule. The term invented by the minister for State Security, Erich Mielke, in the early 1960s for all aspects of undue Western influences was “Political Ideological Diversion” (or PID), which for ideological reasons denied the possibility of doubts and criticism developing from within. Although the late 1970s and the 1980s might have featured a breakdown in the relations among the superpowers, in Europe cooperation continued on a wide variety of levels between the societies in East and West. Much of this later helped to put Soviet-American relations back on track. More important, the early 1980s saw the initiation of key developments in the economic, military, media and human rights fields that turned into momentous factors during the endgame—between 1987 and 1989. Within this dynamically changing international framing, the Stasi’s task of upholding the party’s rule in East Germany first became more complicated and then increasingly obsolete, finally turning itself into a liability.

Rasmus Mariager asks the question of how to explain the widening gulf between the security and Eastern policies of the United States and NATO member countries in Europe during the late 1970s and early 1980s. His findings suggest two interrelated factors: (a) that the Social Democratic parties in Europe played a key role in this development, and (b) that historians in search of explanations should focus more on the role of values and ideas than they have done so far. Mariager argues that the détente-oriented policies of the Northern European Social Democratic parties and their respective governments were meant as a continuation of the kind of Ostpolitik which Willy Brandt promoted in the early 1970s in West Germany. This combination of security policies and strategies for societal transformation in the communist sphere of influence was coordinated within the Socialist International (the association of Social Democratic parties) and Scandilux. Within these frameworks people like Brandt and Bahr were able to forward their ideas about a shared security—shared between West and East, that is—to Scandinavian politicians with considerable international influence, like Olof Palme. With this Mariager provides a key argument for the reason why détente suffered a temporary breakdown in superpower relations—while it lived on and even intensified in societal, economic, and even security political relations in Europe.

#### ***Part IV: Détente in Europe: Change in Perceptions***

Laura Fasanaro looks into the different interpretations provided by Italian personalities and parties with regard to international détente. Fasanaro argues that Italy's own Ostpolitik must be considered in a long-term perspective, beginning in the early 1960s and ending with the breakdown of the Eastern Bloc. While the Christian Democrats and the Socialists essentially shared the American concept of détente as a process for stabilizing Europe and for fixing its political balance, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) looked at détente as a lever for transforming the international system from a bipolar to a multipolar one. Rome's official policy helped to strengthen Italy's economic and political ties with East European countries. Similar to Lippert, Fasanaro also concludes that this economic détente ultimately survived the East-West crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s. For the PCI, instead, détente represented a chance to improve its political stance domestically, abandon the political isolation of the 1950s and 1960s and win the support of a larger and more diversified constituency. The impact of Euro-Communism was much stronger inside the Soviet bloc than in Western Europe and was perceived as a true challenge to the stability and cohesion of the Eastern alliance. These opposite visions of détente continued to exist in Italian politics right until the end of the systemic conflict between East and West.

In her contribution, Sabine Loewe-Hannatzsch looks at the closely knit community of policy analysts both in the East and the West, often referred to as "Kremlinologists" or "Westeners" respectively. She argues that the perceptions held by policy experts of political research institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic underwent significant changes from the early 1970s until 1990. And she concludes that this was to no small extent due to a pronounced shift from a position of dissociation from contacts with the other state to well-structured trans-border contacts. The chapter shows how the often surprisingly similar estimates about the international security situation helped to establish—step by step—a common basis for discussion with enormous potential. When the Soviet and the American governments apparently interrupted diplomatic East-West détente, a number of bilateral contacts between Bonn and East Berlin shifted to a less noticeable level, namely interinstitutional meetings. The exchange of knowledge, know-how, and new ideas on foreign and security policies between these experts resulted in a gradual and mutual degradation of prejudice and resentment and in this way helped to maintain détente in the middle of Europe.

### ***Part V: Détente in Europe: Change in Diplomatic Framings***

Poul Villaume's chapter draws attention to the sometimes critical role played by smaller states within the institutional framing of East-West détente. Danish foreign policy, he argues, played everything but an insignificant role in the European détente process. First, it helped to mobilize NATO support for the idea of a European security conference in the late 1960s; next, it lobbied persistently to bring the significant human dimensions into the Helsinki Final Act, and finally it labored to keep the process alive during the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Considering the antidétente inclinations of other major NATO allies, this was no minor feat. Along with West Germany and Norway, Danish policies and diplomacy thereby contributed to a period of "long détente" in Europe, ranging from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s. A key instrument for enhancing the leverage of smaller states in this process was the concept of multilateral diplomacy. Whereas Henry Kissinger regarded the "endless" CSCE negotiation rounds in the 1970s as "multilateral diplomacy run amok," Danish foreign policy makers—Social Democrats and Liberals alike—saw the CSCE forum as an important avenue of international influence, not least because as an integral part of the Western alliance, Denmark was able to consult and communicate with both the neutral/non-aligned countries and the smaller Eastern Bloc countries.

In his contribution Christian Wenkel addresses the rather gloomy picture of East-West diplomacy during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Analyzing in greater detail the case of France, he is able to show how this changing international environment rapidly influenced national policies. While French national interests dictated a continued interest in détente—and particularly détente in the military field—the governments in Paris had to redefine and adjust their Eastern and security policy to this new framing. Thus the "choking" of détente diplomacy in 1978/79 led to a fundamental review of French interests and the foreign policies deriving therefrom. President Giscard d'Estaing's repeated initiatives for a *détente militaire* can be perceived to have been a result of this process. The same initiatives helped to keep multilateral détente diplomacy going, particularly after the partial failure of the CSCE follow-up conference in Belgrade in 1977–78, and the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building in Europe, which started in Stockholm in 1984, owed much to these earlier and persistent French efforts. But did French diplomacy really "save" détente—and by this even the entire continent—as has recently been claimed in French media? Wenkel addresses this question by showing how French

diplomacy interacted with other bilateral and personal ties, especially with regard to Great Britain and West Germany. By establishing how the *malaise* in superpower relations in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including the volatility of U.S. leadership in East-West relations, created room for new West and East European initiatives, Wenkel's contribution on the diplomatic history forms a suitable bridge to other research in this volume focusing on the hype of semi-official activities in Europe at the time.

### ***Part VI: The U.S. Story: From Cooperation to Confrontation and Back***

Gry Thomasen argues in her chapter on the European policies of the administration of Lyndon B. Johnson that these need to be interpreted in the much broader context of European and superpower détente. Thomasen explains that American bridge-building policies initiated in 1963 constituted a response to the movement toward détente in Europe. The stirrings in Eastern Europe were an opportunity to push for an evolution in the East, whereas the political developments in Western Europe necessitated a response in order to maintain alliance cohesion and Western unity. The Johnson administration sought to streamline West European policies toward Eastern Europe to that of the United States, while at the same time bridge building sought to address the German question and Gaullism within an Atlantic framework. But this effort did not succeed completely. However, the Vietnam War and the unresolved nuclear question within NATO kept the Americans from reaching any formal agreements with the Soviet Union until late 1966, when the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) finally emerged as a real possibility. The treaty, however, proved difficult for America's allies to accept, and this may be one reason why Johnson and his administration did not manage to create a sustainable détente between East and West still in the 1960s.

Finally, Stephan Kieninger's chapter looks at the longevity of America's transformation policy in the era of détente. Taking Gry Thomasen's contribution as a starting point, Kieninger depicts how America's détente policies in the 1970s oscillated between power and mission. Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger's penchant for power politics threatened to undermine America's ideals. By contrast, Jimmy Carter and Zbigniew Brzezinski's human rights rhetoric against the Soviet Union jeopardized the bridges of increased contacts across the Iron Curtain. Presenting new source material, Kieninger argues that Ostpolitik and the CSCE helped the United States to pursue a sustainable and dynamic détente despite the escalating arms race. Kieninger amplifies that Nixon and Kissinger's

static détente policy left the dynamic transformation approach room for survival. Bridge-building continued through transatlantic networking. The CSCE was decisive in this endeavor. Moreover, Kieninger argues that the Helsinki process decisively helped to counteract the emerging crisis of détente in the early 1980s in that it provided both superpowers with a framework in which they could sort out the manifold strains in their relations. Finally, détente blossomed when the CSCE process triggered bold arms control breakthroughs that helped Ronald Reagan to intensify America's policy of change in new circumstances.

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With a few exceptions, the chapters in this volume were originally presented as papers at a research symposium held at the University of Copenhagen in April 2012, organized by Poul Villaume and Rasmus Mariager. The symposium was a dual offshot of two research initiatives: the panel "American Détente and German Ostpolitik in the 1970s," organized by Oliver Bange and Stephan Kieninger at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, held in Alexandria, Virginia; and the collective historical research project on the long 1970s, titled "An Epoch-Making Decade" (2010–2013), based at the University of Copenhagen and headed by Poul Villaume.

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**PART I**

**LONG PERSPECTIVES  
ON DÉTENTE**





# East-West Conflict: Short Cold War and Long Détente

## An Essay on Terminology and Periodization

*Gottfried Niedhart*

The term Cold War suffers from inflationary and imprecise usage. Too often politicians and journalists hurry to call any state of international tension a Cold War. Edward Lucas, referring to an earlier phase of the Putin era, detected a “new Cold War” pursued by the Russian president.<sup>1</sup> Even academic historians are tempted to join in when they are looking for a catchphrase. Sylvain Schirmann found that from 1918 to 1924 there was a “time of Cold War between France and Germany.”<sup>2</sup> More problematic is that Cold War has been understood as a generic term for the whole period of world history between the end of the Western-Soviet alliance after 1945 and the dissolution of the Soviet empire in 1989/90. Unfortunately, many historians regard “Cold War” as synonymous with East-West conflict. As an integral component of the global Cold War whole libraries have been filled by “orthodox,” “revisionist,” and “post-revisionist” studies. The 1990s ushered in a new stage for historians where they could present findings based on new archival material. The result was a boom in so-called new Cold War studies. New centers of research emerged, new book series were founded, and with the *Journal of Cold War Studies* and *Cold War History* two invaluable journals—one Harvard-, the other LSE-based—were established on both sides of the Atlantic.

In recent historiography Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad stand out as noteworthy authors and editors. Leffler has shed new light on the relationship of the superpowers in their struggle “for the soul of mankind.”<sup>3</sup> While concentrating on certain phases of the clash, he does not pay much attention to efforts—in particular those by European actors—to

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<sup>1</sup> Lucas, *The New Cold War*.

<sup>2</sup> Schirmann, “Franco-German Relations,” 75ff.

<sup>3</sup> Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*.

achieve a lessening of tensions. As it is defined by Leffler, *détente* appears as an interim phase without much relevance for the development of the Cold War. In contrast to his monography Leffler, together with Westad, presents a different perspective. The second volume of their three-volume *Cambridge History of the Cold War* (CHCW) is titled *Crisis and Détente*.<sup>4</sup> The first and third volumes are titled *Origins* and *Endings*, respectively. Obviously the editors are of the opinion that the forty years of East-West relations form a unity without much need for periodization. Two explanations can be given for this approach. First, with respect to its political dimension the development and the outcome of the conflict depended on the militarily decisive powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Although the CHCW is by no means restricted to the superpower conflict, a large portion of its contributions is devoted to the United States and the Soviet Union respectively, their mutual relationship and their involvement in almost every issue. Hence, *détente* in Jussi Hanhimäki's article is primarily seen as a "European project" being a "European challenge to the excesses of bipolarity." In Europe the "post-war era finally came to an end" in 1975 when the Helsinki accord was signed.<sup>5</sup> On a global scale, however, the struggle continued. But what was the interrelationship between the "durability of *détente* in Europe"<sup>6</sup> and the course of East-West relations on the superpower level? Were the West Europeans able to act "as a brake on US policy during the 'new' Cold War"?<sup>7</sup>

Second, the popularity of the term Cold War is due to the habit to analyse the whole period of world history after 1945 up to 1989–90 through the Cold War lens. In his stimulating introductory article Westad "attempts to position the Cold War in the history of the twentieth century along some of its main axes: political and economic history, the history of science and technology, and intellectual and cultural history."<sup>8</sup> Given this broad spectrum of themes the CHCW comes along as *l'histoire totale*. Ironically it is this comprehensive treatment which provokes the question of whether the notion of Cold War is really suitable to cover every issue. This is not to say that the East-West competition stopped at any time between 1945 and 1990. But what was its impact in comparison to other burning issues such as energy problems and the upcoming shortage of

<sup>4</sup> Leffler and Westad, *The Cambridge History*.

<sup>5</sup> Hanhimäki, "Détente," 198ff.

<sup>6</sup> Villaume and Westad, "The Secrets of European Détente," 8.

<sup>7</sup> Young, "Western Europe," 289.

<sup>8</sup> Westad, "The Cold War," 2.

resources, financial and economic problems, and the divergence between North and South?<sup>9</sup>

### East-West Conflict rather than ‘Cold War’

Here I argue that the term Cold War, used as a label for the entire period of time between the emergence of the Soviet Union as a superpower and its disappearance, should be replaced. Taking up earlier suggestions put forward mainly by German speaking authors,<sup>10</sup> I make a case for the term East-West conflict instead of Cold War. Admittedly, this is contrary to the mainstream historiography. And I do not have any illusions that the habitual language can be changed. Cold War studies will certainly not become East-West conflict studies. Clearly, Cold War is more “catchy.”<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, it seems to me that conflict is a more neutral term that allows for different states of the East-West relationship. In particular, I argue in this essay<sup>12</sup> that the term Cold War should be reserved for the beginning of the conflict; further, that this *short* Cold War was followed by a *long* détente, not interrupted by a “second” or “new” Cold War and finally facilitating the peaceful resolution of the conflict.<sup>13</sup>

The differentiation between Cold War and détente as two forms of conflict behavior for the duration of the East-West conflict requires definition. From the outset it has to be emphasized that East-West conflict and Cold War are not identical. The Cold War style of East-West relations was shaped by distinct features and limited to a certain period of time. The main characteristics that marked the state of Cold War can be identified as such:

- hostile confrontation and no communication;
- uncontrolled arms race;
- monolithic blocs and military alliances;
- threat perceptions and enemy images;
- formation of a rigid bloc discipline; and
- propaganda campaigns (liberation policy, proletarian internationalism).

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<sup>9</sup> Iriye, “Historicizing the Cold War”; Dülffer, “Ost-West-Konflikt,” 72ff.; Nehring, “What Was the Cold War?,” 923ff.

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Link, *Der Ost-West-Konflikt*, and Dülffer, *Europa im Ost-West-Konflikt*.

<sup>11</sup> Loth, “The Cold War,” 31.

<sup>12</sup> I would like to stress that the notion essay should be taken in a strict way. As an essayist I take the liberty to sharpen to a point my arguments and to limit the footnotes to a minimum.

<sup>13</sup> See also Niedhart, “Der Ost-West-Konflikt.”

It is obvious that these characteristics do not apply to the whole period of East-West relations between 1946–47 and 1989–90. Rather, they apply to the “Cold War conflict in its 1940s and 1950s form.”<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, John Lewis Gaddis, while reflecting on the “new” Cold War history, focuses on the “long” 1950s: “Not the least of the Cold War’s oddities is that its outcome was largely determined before two-thirds of it had even been fought.”<sup>15</sup> This does not mean, however, that he wants to reserve the notion of Cold War for the period between 1946–47 and 1962. According to Gaddis, the Cold War ended in 1989–90, regardless of any variety in the nature of the conflict and regardless of phases that were shaped by hostile confrontation at one time and peaceful engagement at another. Other historians present different views. For Csaba Békés, nature of the Cold War changed fundamentally after 1953.<sup>16</sup> Anders Stephanson, whose strong views about the Cold War as a “US project” are debatable, argues convincingly that the solution respectively the petering out of the Berlin-Cuba crisis (1958–1962) marked a turning point: “The Missile Crisis is the cold war degree zero.” Given the risk of a nuclear war the “decisive change” came with the “recognition of the other side’s legitimacy as a geopolitical actor.”<sup>17</sup>

Most scholars do not dispute that during the 1960s the East-West relationship changed from hostile confrontation to antagonistic cooperation. But there is no consensus as far as the terminology is concerned. Rather there is some confusion. In accordance with the continuity thesis, Cold War means roughly four decades of an adversarial contest. At the same time it can mean, as we have already seen, a limited phase of this ongoing conflict, namely the 1946/47–1962 or the 1979–1983 periods. In mainstream historiography the Cold War confrontation of the long 1950s is followed by a period of détente with a peak in 1975 when the Helsinki Final Act was signed. However, the East-West honeymoon was relatively short. Next came a renewed sharpening of the conflict. A volume titled *Crisis of Détente in Europe* deals with the period between 1975 and 1985; however editor Leopoldo Nuti is not consistent in his terminology. At first glance the notion “crisis” indicates that East-West relations after 1975 did not regress to the state of confrontation which had shaped the long 1950s. But the reader is told in the introduction that there was “a return of the

<sup>14</sup> Westad, “The New International History,” 563.

<sup>15</sup> Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 280.

<sup>16</sup> See Csaba Békés’s contribution in this volume, as well as Mikhail Lipkin’s contribution.

<sup>17</sup> Stephanson, “Cold War Degree Zero,” 36f.

Cold War to Europe after a period of détente.”<sup>18</sup> On the same page Nuti is full of praise for Ennio di Nolfo as a stimulating teacher and organizer in the field of contemporary history, although Di Nolfo is known for his admonition that the term Cold War should be defined more precisely and reserved for the period between 1947 and 1955.<sup>19</sup> A similar periodization approach can be found in Frédéric Bozo’s study on *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification*. Apart from the general habit to use the term Cold War as a synonym for East-West conflict, Bozo speaks of the “new Cold War” in the first half and “new détente” in the second half of the 1980s.<sup>20</sup>

Clearly, we can say that Cold War is a term with various meanings. Furthermore, there is a tendency to follow a flawed logic. If Cold War is used as a label for world history between 1945 and 1990, then détente appears as a variety of the Cold War: détente as a “middle Cold War,” or: Cold War as détente.<sup>21</sup> If, on the other hand, Cold War and détente are understood as special modes of conflict that emerged successively, then Cold War must be ruled out as a generic term. One cannot have it both ways.

## The Continuity of Détente

Again: this essay proposes a correction to the habit of using Cold War as a synonym for East-West conflict. Furthermore, I argue that détente, though not a linear process, was a new method of conflict behavior that saved the world from a relapse into hostile confrontation. Détente emerged in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Helsinki Final Act, rather than being the pinnacle of détente opened up new avenues for post-Cold War East-West relations. Essentially there was a continuity of détente.

The long détente thesis requires an adequate comprehension of the nature of détente. Most important, détente mattered because a lessening of tensions was in the interest of both East and West. Basically, in the age of nuclear weapons war was inconceivable. More positively, détente stimulated contacts, in particular trade relations. On the one hand this insight was self-evident. On the other hand, overcoming Cold War habits, which had shaped international politics after World War II, demanded new con-

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<sup>18</sup> Nuti, *The Crisis of Détente*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Di Nolfo, “Der Kalte Krieg.”

<sup>20</sup> Bozo, *Mitterrand*, 7ff.

<sup>21</sup> Hanhimäki, “Détente,” 198; Hildebrand, “The Cold War as Détente.”

cepts which, in the beginning, were unfamiliar to the wider public and also to the political class. Conceiving détente preceded practicing it. The language of détente used a new vocabulary with communication, renunciation of force and peaceful coexistence as keywords.

After a while détente was practiced. Both sides developed new forms of communication. Direct and informal regular contact started between Washington and Moscow culminating in the Kissinger-Dobrynin back channel. A whole system of back channels, including the Chancellery in Bonn, helped to prepare the bilateral treaties between the Federal Republic of Germany and its Eastern neighbors and also the Four Power agreement on Berlin. Summit diplomacy became a regular feature in East-West relations. Brandt and Brezhnev swimming in the Black Sea on the occasion of their meeting in the Crimea in September 1971 and Nixon meeting the Chinese and Soviet leaders respectively in Beijing and Moscow in 1972 were among the spectacular events which signaled a hitherto unknown rapprochement between East and West. A network of communication lines with state and non-state actors alike grew continually.

In 1963 Egon Bahr's celebrated formula was "change through rapprochement." Change was at hand in 1975 when the CSCE summit gathered in Helsinki. The Final Act defined the principles that from then on were to rule the relations and interactions among the signatory states. Above all towered the renunciation of the use of force and the inviolability of frontiers. This self-obligation for peace keeping was complemented by a much enlarged definition of peace itself. Henceforth, certain norms and domestic political structures counted as essential preconditions for the stabilization of peace. This included intensified economic exchange and last but not least respect for human rights and improved possibilities for travelling abroad and access to information across the line that still divided West and East in Europe but at the same time became permeable.

The détente style transformation of Europe<sup>22</sup> had two main effects. First, mutual European perceptions became more nuanced. Crude enemy images were no longer maintained. Second, détente resulted in the growing weight of European policy-makers in international relations. The relaxation of tensions between East and West provided small- and medium-sized states with

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<sup>22</sup> Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975*. There is a growing literature on the CSCE process after 1975, such as Peter and Wentker, *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt*; Peter, *Die Bundesrepublik*; Snyder, *Human Rights Activism*. See also the bibliography regularly published by the Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik Hamburg at <http://ifsh.de/core/service-ressourcen/bibliographie-zur-kszeosze>.

more room to maneuver. The new multilateral dynamism in East-West relations produced both cross-bloc and intra-bloc repercussions.

Having said this, one has to have in mind that détente did not end the East-West conflict. But both on the global level of superpower relations and within Europe the Cold War style confrontation was left behind. Repeatedly the leaders in East and West emphasized that East-West relations had entered a new phase. As early as 1966, during his visit to the Soviet Union, President Charles de Gaulle envisaged the possibility of “détente” in Europe, followed by “entente” and “coopération.”<sup>23</sup> In 1973 his successor Georges Pompidou believed that the Cold War had “disappeared.”<sup>24</sup> Prime Minister Edward Heath distinguished between Cold War and détente as two separate phases in East-West relations.<sup>25</sup> A new edition of the Soviet diplomatic dictionary edited in 1973 by Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko spoke of the “turn from Cold War to détente.”<sup>26</sup> Leonid Brezhnev in 1974 praised the “progress” achieved in the past few years when successful steps had been undertaken to “bury the Cold War.”<sup>27</sup> Helmut Schmidt was less sure but he expected, we are going to “overcome it.”<sup>28</sup> Last but not least: Henry Kissinger referred to “modern methods” in his approach to the Soviet Union, “which are not those of the cold war period but are entirely new.”<sup>29</sup>

Yet the same politicians stressed that détente did not dissolve the underlying substantial tensions in East-West relations. Détente did not remove the fundamental dissent on how the future should look. In 1970 Władysław Gomułka spoke succinctly “about the start of a new way, about the end of the Cold War.” He evoked the image of “a fresh, blank page in front of us. Our opponents intend to fill this page to their advantage, we to ours.”<sup>30</sup> How much Europe’s reality in the mid-1970s was still

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<sup>23</sup> De Gaulle in a public statement on June 30, 1966: “Il s’agit de mettre en oeuvre successivement: la détente, l’entente et la coopération dans notre Europe tout entière.” De Gaulle, *Discours*, 58.

<sup>24</sup> AAPD 1973. “Pompidou in conversation with Brandt,” June 21, 1973, 1021.

<sup>25</sup> Willy Brandt Archive, Bonn, A8. “Heath in a letter to Brandt,” September 27, 1971, 52.

<sup>26</sup> Wiederkehr, “Die Verwendung des Terminus,” 68.

<sup>27</sup> AAPD 1974. “Conversation between Brezhnev and Helmut Schmidt during Schmidt’s first visit to Moscow as Federal Chancellor,” October 30, 1974, 1392.

<sup>28</sup> Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestags. Stenographische Berichte, 7. Wahlperiode. Speech delivered at the *Bundestag*, January 30, 1975, 10040.

<sup>29</sup> “Kissinger during a meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Miki,” FRUS, vol. 39, August 5, 1975, 988.

<sup>30</sup> Gomułka in conversation with the journalist Rakowski in September 1970. Rakowski, *Dzienniki polityczne*, 241.

dominated by the conflict between East and West was shown by the differing interpretations of the Helsinki Final Act. The governments of the Warsaw Pact member states highlighted the static elements therein: the inviolability of frontiers and the principle of the noninterference in the domestic affairs of other states. The West—supported by the neutral and nonaligned states—in turn focused on the document’s dynamic potential, insisting on the possibility of a peaceful change of frontiers or at least their greater permeability.

The Western concept of a “*détente dynamique*”<sup>31</sup> aimed at overcoming the status quo. Kissinger wished “to weaken Soviet political influence in Eastern Europe.” He believed “we can weaken it more effectively by *détente* than we could by cold war.”<sup>32</sup> Of particular interest in the European context was the West German role. Bonn respected the status quo of the two German states on a territory that was much smaller than that of the former German Reich. However, this did not solve the German question once and for all. Overcoming Germany’s division remained a long-term goal. The Federal Republic continued to be a revisionist state, set to change the status quo in the course of a more comprehensive peaceful change in East-West affairs—at the expense of the GDR and to the detriment of the political structures in the Soviet sphere of influence. In an internal paper in late 1969 Bahr was more than adamant about this: “The main goal of the Soviet policy is the legalisation of the status quo. The main goal of our policy is to overcome it.”<sup>33</sup>

Notwithstanding an overriding interest in *détente*, the expectations over its effect were incompatible. Thus, right from the outset, the policy of *détente* facilitated a gradual de-escalation of the conflict but not the “structure of peace” envisaged by President Nixon at the beginning of his term of office.<sup>34</sup> This in turn was exactly the point where the strategy of *détente* was criticized by those in the West as well as in the East who were skeptical about *détente* in the first place. The controversy over *détente* was

<sup>31</sup> In his account on the CSCE the French diplomat Jacques Andréani distinguished between “*détente statique*” and “*détente dynamique*,” *Le piège*, 41. See also Badalassi, *En finir avec la guerre froide*.

<sup>32</sup> “Kissinger during a meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Miki,” FRUS, vol. 39, August 5, 1975, 987. For more on this aspect, see Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed*; Zanchetta, *The Transformation*.

<sup>33</sup> “Memorandum by Bahr,” AAPD 1969, September 18, 1969, 1040. For a more detailed analysis of the German-Soviet conflict of interests, see Niedhart, *Entspannung in Europa*. See also Niedhart, “The Transformation of the Other Side.”

<sup>34</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 1477.



essentially about the meaning of détente. In the United States, détente became a dirty word. Any definition of détente has to take into consideration that détente did not dissolve the conflict of interests or the ideological differences. Moments of crisis of détente were not exclusive to the late 1970s. The Middle East crisis in 1973 and the Portuguese revolution in 1974–75 with the risk of a partly communist government in Lisbon emerged in parallel with the CSCE negotiations in Geneva. Rather than being “limits of détente,”<sup>35</sup> they were an integral part of it. The same holds true with regard to East-West competition in the Third World. The “global Cold War”<sup>36</sup> became intense in the second half of the 1970s. But it was already under way in 1972 when the Brezhnev-Nixon summit took place in Moscow. Shortly before this highlight of détente the Soviet Union committed itself to supporting Afghanistan and Iraq. As a counterbalancing measure, Nixon made a stopover in Tehran before returning to the United States. The visit resulted in an increased number of arms being delivered to Iran.

The main question—be it in the United States, Western Europe, or the Soviet Union—was whether the détente approach would be of benefit to one’s own security and economic performance. In the economic field it was particularly the Soviet Union where enormous expectations existed in order to overcome its economic and technological backwardness. Hence, the increasing economic exchange with the West, although it did not solve any structural problems within the Soviet system, was of vital importance in Soviet opinion and justified compromise solutions such as the Moscow Treaty with the Federal Republic or those made during the CSCE negotiations. The FRG became the most important Western trading partner. But Soviet expectations regarding the benefits of economic cooperation were too high. As a consequence, disillusionment and frustration spread. The growth of West German *Osthandel* was limited due to the FRG’s economy being oriented mainly toward Western markets and the differences in the economic systems. Also adding to this was the turmoil of world economy in 1973 due to the oil crisis. Real progress could happen only on the condition that the Soviet economy became more receptive to Western standards and methods. This, however, would have meant an opening of the Soviet system, which would have been to the West’s advantage and for obvious reasons could not be tolerated by any communist regime.

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<sup>35</sup> Daigle, *The Limits of Détente*.

<sup>36</sup> Westad, *The Global Cold War*.

Surely, the process of détente was supported by the search for common, if limited economic interests. But it depended fundamentally on progress in the realm of international security and confidence-building. Time and again, the Brandt government in Bonn told the Soviet leadership that détente would be incomplete and even in danger if there were no reduction of troops and armaments. The Soviets did not respond to this admonition. Quite the reverse: Soviet military forces systematically pushed ahead. Thus, military détente as the centerpiece of détente was missing right from the beginning. East-West relations in the era of détente were shaped by a “non-bellicose, but not a non-military, behavior.”<sup>37</sup> The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) and Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) agreements in 1972, together with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), marked important steps forward in the direction of superpower détente. At the same time it left loopholes enabling the continuation of the arms race. Until the late 1980s, disarmament was not on the détente agenda. On the contrary, under the heading of modernization, new weapons technologies were developed on both sides beginning in the early 1970s, leading to the missile crisis in Europe in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>38</sup>

Rather than talking of a crisis of détente, or even of a revival of the Cold War, one should bear in mind that détente was always an ambiguous affair. Détente transformed the state of Cold War to a state of antagonistic cooperation. The cooperative elements helped to contain the antagonism that lasted until the end of the East-West conflict. In 1983, the so-called war scare when the superpowers seemed to be close to a dramatic showdown and when the danger of fatal misperceptions existed, could be kept under control—not least because the experience with détente prevented Soviet leadership from reckoning with a Western attack. In 1983, the world was not on the verge of a nuclear war, contrary to the Cuba crisis in 1962.<sup>39</sup>

It is revealing that the term Cold War was hardly used by decision-makers in the early 1980s. On the one hand, they did not abstain from an aggressive rhetoric. On the other hand, there was a clear message: Notwithstanding severe tensions, a return to an all-out Cold War was to be avoided. Overall, West European governments were very clear in this

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<sup>37</sup> Bange and Lemke, “Einleitung,” 11.

<sup>38</sup> Zaloga, *The Kremlin's Nuclear Sword*, 171ff.; Bange, “SS 20 und Pershing II,” 72ff.

<sup>39</sup> Mastny, “How Able Was ‘Able Archer?’” 120; Kramer, “Die Nicht-Krise,” 148; Adam-sky, “Not Crying Wolf.”

respect. President François Mitterrand told the French public in December 1981: "Everything that will allow an exit from Yalta will be good." Hence, the Quai d'Orsay did not want to put at stake what had been achieved during the 1970s and wished to "keep open the paths of communication with the countries of Eastern Europe."<sup>40</sup> Equally, in Willy Brandt's view everything had to be done in order to prevent a "relapse into the Cold War."<sup>41</sup> A personification of the continuity of détente was Hans-Dietrich Genscher, foreign minister since 1974 and also part of the new West German government under Helmut Kohl. In 1982 he praised the benefits of the "dynamic policy of détente," which had created completely new opportunities that had been inconceivable "in the atmosphere of confrontation of the Cold War."<sup>42</sup> Occasionally, President Ronald Reagan too made a distinction between the Cold War confrontation and the American-Soviet tensions of his own time. Due to his deep-seated "anti-nuclearism,"<sup>43</sup> he never ruled out the necessity of a "constructive relationship with the Soviet Union"<sup>44</sup>—on the condition, of course, that "America's decline" as perceived by the Reagan administration could be overcome.<sup>45</sup> Reagan attributed the worst possible habits to the Soviet leaders.

<sup>40</sup> Speech by Mitterrand, December 31, 1981, and memorandum March 17, 1982; Bozo, *Mitterrand*, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Interview for *Der Spiegel*, January 14, 1980; Brandt, *Die Entspannung*, 254.

<sup>42</sup> Genscher, "Toward an Overall Western Strategy," 57f. See also von Bressendorf, *Frieden durch Kommunikation*.

<sup>43</sup> Fischer, "US Foreign Policy," 287.

<sup>44</sup> Address at Commencement Exercises at Eureka College in Illinois, May 9, 1982, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=42501>.

<sup>45</sup> This point was reached when Reagan pointed out in his Address to the Nation on January 16, 1984: "I believe that 1984 finds the United States in the strongest position in years to establish a constructive and realistic working relationship with the Soviet Union. We've come a long way since the decade of the seventies, years when the United States seemed filled with self-doubt and neglected its defenses, while the Soviet Union increased its military might and sought to expand its influence by armed forces and threat. [ . . . ] Three years ago, we embraced a mandate from the American people to change course, and we have. With the support of the American people and the Congress we halted America's decline. Our economy is now in the midst of the best recovery since the sixties. Our defenses are being rebuilt, our alliances are solid, and our commitment to defend our values has never been more clear." (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=39806>)

It should be noted that Reagan's speech, which is widely interpreted as his return to détente due to the experience of a dangerous war scare and to the pressure by the Freeze movement, began being drafted prior to Able Archer. On the roles of George Shultz and Jack Matlock, see Wilson, *The Triumph of Improvisation*, 63ff. and 200f.

They were prepared “to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat.”<sup>46</sup> But he also agreed with Winston Churchill whom he quoted on the occasion of a visit to the UK: “I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war.”<sup>47</sup> In his infamous address to the Annual Convention of Evangelicals in March 1983 Reagan, in the tradition of Cold War rhetoric, called communism “the focus of evil in the modern world” and the Soviet Union “an evil empire.” But it should be noted that in the same speech he looked back to “the time of the cold war,” obviously meaning an earlier period of East-West confrontation.<sup>48</sup> It is not this differentiation that was reported. It was the “evil empire” that hit the headlines. When Reagan depicted communism as the “focus of evil,” he appealed to an audience who wanted to hear just this and held a Manichean view of the world with a clear and simple distinction between “right and wrong and good and evil.” Reagan’s rhetoric, in turn, induced his opponents to perceive him as an irresponsible politician and as a maker of “the second Cold War.”<sup>49</sup> Historiography is still influenced by this contemporary view.

Détente did not result in a stable structure of peace. But neither did the harsh rhetoric of the early 1980s lead to a Cold War “structure.”<sup>50</sup> The adversaries were compelled into a peaceful coexistence, but they also deliberately preserved the main achievement of détente: the diplomatic technique of communication was never discarded. Both sides continued to meet at conference tables. Arms control negotiations proved to be difficult and were sometimes interrupted. But the negotiating process as such survived. SALT II was not ratified, but de facto carried out. The CSCE follow-up conference in Belgrade made the dissenting positions perfectly clear, but the institution of the CSCE was not destroyed. In spite of the tensions at the turn of the 1970s to the 1980s the Madrid CSCE follow-up meeting took place between 1980 and 1983. In short, what is often called the breakdown of détente or the rise of a second Cold War was in fact the continuation of the East-West antagonism that was an essential part of the long détente.

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<sup>46</sup> Press conference, January 29, 1981, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=44101>.

<sup>47</sup> Speech delivered in London, June 8, 1982, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=42614>.

<sup>48</sup> Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, March 8, 1983, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=41023>.

<sup>49</sup> Halliday, *The Making*.

<sup>50</sup> Stephanson, “Cold War Degree Zero,” 40. Carole Fink stresses the “ambivalent nature of détente” but admits also: “Détente succeeded in establishing some permanent ground rules of U.S.-Soviet behavior that lasted until the end—and even beyond—the Cold War” (*Cold War*, 169).

# **The Long Détente and the Soviet Bloc, 1953–1983**

*Csaba Békés*

There are several interpretations of détente, but the prevailing idea in mainstream scholarship is that it was the period between 1969 and 1975 when the relaxation of tension in East-West relations produced spectacular results. This included the settlement of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the Soviet Bloc states; U.S.-Soviet agreements on arms limitation and bilateral cooperation; and the convening of a pan-European conference on security and cooperation, eventually culminating in the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

## **Détente Revisited**

There is formidable evidence to argue that détente started in 1953 and ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The short period between 1953 and 1956 was a major landmark, after which the Cold War meant something else than before. During these formative years the most important trend in East-West relations was the mutual and gradual realization and understanding of the fact that the two opposing political-military blocs and ideologies had to live side by side and tolerate one another in order to avoid a Third World War, one waged by thermonuclear weapons, which would certainly lead to total destruction. Therefore the main characteristic in the relationship of the conflicting superpowers and their political-military blocs after 1953 was—despite the ever increasing competition in the arms race—the continual interdependence and compelled cooperation of the United States and the Soviet Union while imminent antagonism obviously remained. Ideological antagonism, competition, conflict, and confrontation remained constant elements of the Cold War structure but now they were controlled by the détente elements: interde-

pendence and compelled cooperation with the tacit aim of avoiding a direct military confrontation of the superpowers.<sup>1</sup>

It could justifiably be asked, why should 1953 be considered a watershed year? Arguably, even earlier, the leaders of the superpowers, including Stalin, did not actually plan to launch an attack on the other side, but they did not rule out the possibility of their opponent starting a war. Thus the fundamental change was not due to Stalin's death but to technological developments. In 1952, the H-bomb was tested by the United States; the Soviets followed in 1953. The experience of the unprecedented destructive power of the atomic bomb in reality did not drastically change strategic thinking on future warfare. Even after the Soviet Union became a nuclear power in 1949, it was assumed that even in the case of widespread use of A-bombs on both sides in an armed conflict, the enemy could be defeated in a Third World War.<sup>2</sup> The alarming idea that such a conflict could result in the total annihilation of human civilization by destruction and long-lasting nuclear radiation emerged only after the invention of the H-bomb. Between 1952 and 1955 H-bombs with an ever-increasing yield were tested on both sides, proving that these new weapons meant a drastic and therefore qualitative change in the nuclear arms race.<sup>3</sup> All this made it apparent to policy-makers that a new world war waged by thermonuclear weapons could not be won. The shocking idea of MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) which was "invented" by John Neumann in the mid-1950s now seems reasonable. The combination of these circumstances led to the realization that, the other party simply could not want to launch a war, and soon, as the most important result of the Geneva Summit in July, 1955 it became evident that neither party really wanted to start a war.

It must be made clear that the antagonism between the two world systems existed from the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 until the demise of the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup> During the Cold War era—from the end of World War II

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<sup>1</sup> I first published this theory in Hungarian in 1997; see Békés, "Hidegháború, enyhülés," and later in English in Békés, "Cold War, Détente," and then in several other English-language publications. An updated and extended version of my argument will be published in: Békés, *Cold War, Détente, (R)evolution*.

<sup>2</sup> Holloway, "Nuclear Weapons," 380–82.

<sup>3</sup> Castle Bravo, the biggest U.S. H-bomb tested in 1954 had a yield of fifteen megatons of TNT, which was approximately 1,000 times more destructive than the A-bomb dropped on Hiroshima in August 1945. Soviet H-bombs tested in this period had an even greater yield, the climax being the 50 megaton Tsar Bomba, which exploded in 1961 and in fact had the capacity of 100 megatons.

<sup>4</sup> See Engerman, "Ideology and the Origins."

until 1991—based on their mutually exclusive ideologies, each side regarded the other as an eternal enemy. In the long term, both sides believed that in the competition between capitalism and communism, their respective system would eventually triumph and the other consequently perish. What made the Cold War so dangerous, however, was not ideological but military antagonism, in which field there was no *dénouement*, not even during the years of high détente. On the contrary, from 1945 until 1987 an ever-increasing arsenal of nuclear and conventional weapons were deployed on both sides. NATO and Warsaw Pact military plans alike regarded each other as lethal enemies to be destroyed—even if this meant the total annihilation of the population of their opponent—in the case of an armed conflict waged by thermonuclear weapons. Both NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries conducted military exercises and war games against the other bloc. More important, the enormous number of intercontinental and medium-range ballistic missiles with a nuclear capacity to make human life impossible on Earth were targeted at each other's military facilities and major cities until the end of the Cold War in 1991. While the leaders of both superpowers did everything they could to successfully avoid a military clash, a Third World War *ad absurdum* could have broken out by accident exactly during the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in August 1975, at the time of the triumph of détente.

The mechanism of compelled cooperation, however, was not visible to contemporaries. We know now that it was the tacit recognition of the European status quo and spheres of influence that explain American inaction at the time of all the Soviet Bloc's internal crises, which consequently can be regarded as only pseudo crises in the East-West relationship. More important, the real crises of the time, particularly the second Berlin crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis, could be resolved peacefully via secret diplomacy. In the latter case this included neglecting and even deceiving allies on both sides—using the mechanism of compelled cooperation, aimed at finding a compromise solution and even directly helping the opponent to save face, in order to avoid the escalation of the crisis. Raymond Garthoff has pointed out the continual presence of coexistence and competition during the Cold War.<sup>5</sup> Yet this new theory posits that the mechanism of compelled cooperation played an important role not only in periods when the element of cooperation was dominant in East-West relations, but was also a crucial means of solving the crises exactly at the time of gravest confrontations.

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<sup>5</sup> Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 3–4.

All this means is that détente was not a simple tactical move resulting in the temporary easing of tension in superpower relations but it was a system of serious and permanent interdependency based on mutual responsibility for the preservation of human civilization that forced the superpowers to cooperate in order to avoid direct military conflict. Détente was thus a new model of East-West coexistence based on the compelled cooperation of the two blocs, characteristic of the second phase of the Cold War after 1953—controlling and determining the actions of the political leaders on both sides. While détente was an integral part of the Cold War international structure that disappeared only after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union in 1991, détente and the Cold War international structure were not mutually exclusive. Therefore we cannot speak about détente “overcoming the Cold War,”<sup>6</sup> as the former did not replace the latter; the two simply coexisted. Examples of the omnipresent mechanism of compelled superpower cooperation can be found throughout several stages of the East-West relationship from 1953 to 1991.

### **Peaceful Coexistence, Détente, and the Soviet Bloc**

The new strategy of peaceful coexistence was introduced by the old-new Soviet collective leadership emerging after Stalin’s funeral in March 1953. This lends remarkable credence to the idea that this policy was not initiated at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in February 1956, as most studies on the topic claim. At that forum it was elevated to the level of a long-term doctrine based on the thesis that war between the socialist and capitalist camps was not inevitable; indeed, it was in force until the dissolution of the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

This meant a much more flexible foreign policy aimed at radically easing tensions in East-West relations and the continual deepening of political and especially, economic cooperation with the West, with the obvious aim of reducing the cost of the arms race and thus improving the Soviet Union’s chances of surviving the intensifying competition between the two opposing blocs.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Loth, *Overcoming the Cold War*.

<sup>7</sup> Békés, “East Central Europe, 1953–1956.”

<sup>8</sup> For a recent survey of Soviet policy after Stalin’s death, see Mastny, “Soviet foreign policy.” See also Békés, “East Central Europe, 1953–1960.” Another important recent collective work on the topic is Larres and Osgood, *The Cold War after Stalin's Death*.



“Peaceful coexistence,” a term still widely used by scholars, was introduced and then propagated by Soviet politicians. One may easily argue that the term “compelled coexistence,” describes the nature of this relationship more accurately. The coexistence of the two camps was in reality peaceful only in Europe, while in many other parts of the world clashes and military conflicts between the representatives or proxies of the two blocs occurred regularly until the end of the Cold War era.<sup>9</sup>

For the Soviet Bloc leaders it meant a competition between the two blocs, which they believed they would eventually win. This did not mean giving up the class struggle as such: it only meant that the focus of the class struggle was redirected from Europe—their most important territory for attempting to advance communism so far—to the Third World, where supporting mostly indigenous liberation movements and postcolonial governments created a chance for the Soviets to expand their influence.<sup>10</sup> Penetration into these countries started as early as 1953 and not in the late 1950s or the early 1960s as assumed by many. Nor did “peaceful coexistence” mean giving up the arms race, as the main Soviet goal was to achieve and then maintain nuclear parity at any cost with the United States, thus providing the Soviet Union with their long dreamed-for status as an equal superpower. To be sure, peaceful coexistence was truly peaceful in the sense that Soviet Bloc leaders wanted to preserve peace between the superpowers by all means and as far as available sources indicate, they never wanted to start a war with the West. Therefore from the mid-1950s one may say that Moscow was trying to consolidate the territorial gains of World War II by offering the West a deal on achieving the *de jure* acceptance of the European status quo established in 1945 and in turn providing a guarantee for Western Europe against a potential Soviet Bloc attack, while tacitly also denouncing any further aspirations for using the communist parties in the West to work toward a takeover.

The multinational archival evidence now available to scholars proves convincingly that not every crisis that occurred during the Cold War era was attributable to the Cold War. After World War II, and especially until the mid-1960s, both Eastern and Western public opinion were determined by an ideological and strategic East-West opposition, thus automatically labeling all major internal crises within the Eastern bloc as well as other conflicts of the East-West relationship without differentiation as East-West, that is Cold War crises. Scholarship has more or less agreed with

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<sup>9</sup> On global conflicts during the Cold War, see Westad, *The Global Cold War*.

<sup>10</sup> On Soviet policy toward the Third World, see *ibid*.

this narrative, incorporating these conflicts into the general history of the East-West relationship. It should be made clear that most of these conflicts were not real crises in the sense that they did not exceed the above outlined cooperation framework of the superpowers, despite what their propaganda said; namely, they did not cause a real threat to the interests of the opposing political-military bloc. They in fact did not challenge the post-World War II European status quo and consequently did not disturb the East-West relationship in the long run. Such apparent East-West crises that had their effect only at the level of public opinion and propaganda were all crises of the Soviet Bloc: the 1953 Berlin uprising, the events of 1956 in Poland and Hungary, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and finally the Polish conflict in 1980–81.

The Soviet leaders were fully aware of this distinction from the outset and they never expected any serious Western response to their crisis management within their own sphere of influence. Their only miscalculation was the invasion of Afghanistan—regarded by Moscow as a logical and legitimate move along the above lines, yet on the Western side deemed a grossly illegitimate expansion of the Soviet sphere of influence.

### **The Soviet Bloc and the Helsinki Process**

The Soviets had originally raised the idea of creating a collective European security system in the 1930s under Stalin. Twenty years later, the post-Stalinist leadership created a “new” initiative that failed again as Western powers regarded it as a mere propaganda trick aimed at avoiding West Germany’s entry to NATO. But Moscow did not give up. Ten years later, in December 1964 it resurfaced as a Polish initiative at the UN General Assembly. A month later the first call for a pan-European security conference was included in the communiqué published after the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee (WP PCC) meeting in Warsaw in January 1965.<sup>11</sup> In the second half of 1965, the issue of a potential European security conference was taken over by Soviet diplomacy. From that point this question—in close correlation with Moscow’s endeavors to settle the German question—became the central problem of the period and lasted until the middle of the 1970s.

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<sup>11</sup> For a detailed account of the Soviet Bloc’s policy vis-à-vis the issue of European security, see Békés’s “The Warsaw Pact and the Helsinki Process,” “The Warsaw Pact, the German Question,” and “Hungary, the Soviet Bloc.”

The Bucharest session of the WP PCC in July 1966 was devoted to the issue of the security conference. The Bucharest Declaration issued at the end of the meeting called upon the leaders of the states to start preliminary talks on the staging of a conference on European security. At the same time, however, the Eastern Bloc's preconditions were also established: The West was to accept the existence of the two German states, and the FRG was to give up the claim of sole representation of the German people and recognize the existing Eastern borders. This appeal, nevertheless, constituted the Eastern Bloc's first serious initiative concerning the institutional settlement of East-West relations, while also being the first important step on the road to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975.

As for convincing the political and governmental circles in Western Europe, the Soviets resorted to the tools of a decentralization policy. After the Warsaw Pact's Bucharest appeal, Moscow began firmly urging the member states of the pact to engage in bilateral negotiations with the Western European countries to convince them how significant this initiative was with respect to the development of East-West relations. The main goal of this campaign was to promote the Soviets' most important strategic goal: convening a pan-European security conference in order to confirm the European status quo that had been established after World War II.

The results of the campaign could be seen in almost three years' time: the "Budapest Appeal," issued at the WP PCC meeting in Budapest on March 17, 1969, has become known as the document that actually did initiate the preparatory process for the European security conference.<sup>12</sup> While the Soviet Bloc's position did not change in the meantime, the crucial factor for the breakthrough was a changed attitude on the Western side (NATO's Harmel report, the new approach of the incoming Nixon administration and significant changes in the FRG). Nevertheless, by this time, unknown to the outside world, serious internal debates jeopardized the hitherto unified position of the Warsaw Pact. Therefore the main achievement of the Budapest meeting was the acceptance by all parties of the Soviet-Hungarian proposal (supported by Romania) that there should be no preconditions for the convening of a European Security Conference. The inclusion of this clause in the Budapest Appeal would prove to be a crucial factor in bringing about the CSCE process. While for outsiders the unanimous Warsaw Pact position looked only too logical, in reality this

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<sup>12</sup> For the text of the declaration, see Byrne and Mastny, *A Cardboard Castle?* For a detailed account of the dramatic behind the scenes talks during the WP PCC meeting, see Békés, "The Warsaw Pact and the Helsinki Process."

decision was made after unprecedented harsh debates among the WP members. By the mid-1960s the Soviet Bloc was clearly divided into a *security concerned* and an *economy oriented* sub-bloc as far as the German question was concerned. The members of the latter group, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, had no serious unsettled issues with the FRG and were therefore interested in economic cooperation, increasing trade and taking over cutting-edge technologies. The members of the security concerned sub-bloc (the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia), while also interested in economic cooperation with the West, were primarily interested in guaranteeing their security by acquiring assurances from the FRG to recognize their post-1945 borders. The Budapest appeal then clearly meant the victory of the economy-oriented sub-bloc over their opponents. However, the ongoing struggle between the two groups characterized the Warsaw Pact decision-making process until the settlement of the FRG's relations with the Soviet Bloc at the end of 1973.

Bilateral negotiations by the Warsaw Pact member states that went on uninterruptedly until the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 contributed to easing international tensions, gradually increasing confidence between the representatives of the two sides and promoting the development of a common European conscience in the long run. As a result, the European allies of the Soviet Union participated in the preparatory negotiations for the Helsinki Conference not simply as mere executors of Soviet policy—or Moscow's proxies—but in several cases acted as independent actors, often playing an important role in shaping the overall process.

The signing of the Helsinki Final Act was seen as a long-awaited legal guarantee for the legalization of the European status quo, and was naturally regarded as a huge success and victory by the Soviet Bloc leaders.<sup>13</sup> The price for the historic compromise was accepting Basket III with a promise that the freer movement of people, information, and ideas would be made possible in the Soviet Bloc as well. It should be remembered, however, that in Yalta in February 1945 Stalin had signed the Declaration on Liberated Europe, explicitly promising free elections in Soviet-occupied East-Central Europe—the result of that promise only too well-known. Indeed, the Soviet Bloc leaders, while aware of the problem, were confident that their authoritarian regimes and closed societies would effectively block attempts by both the West and the internal opposition in

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<sup>13</sup> For two recent collective works on the Helsinki process, see Niedhart and Bange, *The CSCE 1975*; Wenger, Mastny, and Nuenlist, *Origins of the European Security System*.

their countries at using the Basket III for undermining their regimes.<sup>14</sup> The principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of other states, also included in the Helsinki Final Act at the Eastern side's pressure, gave them a convenient legal basis for rejecting any undesirable intervention.

While it is widely believed that Basket III and later the U.S.-led human rights campaign crucially contributed to the eventual collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, these factors, in reality had only marginal impact on developments in the region. Conversely, the role of Basket II is generally underestimated—although the ever-broadening economic cooperation between the Eastern and Western parts of Europe eventually led to a serious economic and financial dependency from and indebtedness to the West. We can argue that the economic cooperation originally seen in the East as a vehicle for consolidating the Soviet Bloc economies—especially by the transfer of developed technologies—would, by the end of the 1980s, become a catalyst in the collapse of the communist systems.<sup>15</sup> The collapse itself, however, was due neither to the economic nor to the human rights factor; but it occurred as a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union itself—underway since the middle of 1988. To be sure, between the two factors the economic one was much greater. While credit is generally given to U.S. policies for ending the Cold War on the Western side, the role of the FRG is usually underestimated. As the number one Western economic partner of most Soviet Bloc states, the role of the FRG in destabilizing the East European countries was much greater than previously assumed. History's irony, however, is that all this was not intentional; on the contrary, Bonn was interested in reforming and stabilizing the communist regimes as late as the summer of 1989.<sup>16</sup>

For the Soviets, the Helsinki process was explicitly a European project. This is important to emphasize, as the U.S. involvement in the CSCE led to a general misperception that stabilizing the status quo between the superpowers was a deal effective worldwide, not just in Europe. For the Soviets, however, détente was absolutely compatible with their penetration in the Third World especially as in most cases their military and economic support was given for indigenous revolutionary movements. Mos-

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<sup>14</sup> Savranskaya, "The Logic of 1989"; see also Savranskaya and Taubman, "Soviet Foreign Policy"; and Zubok, "Soviet Foreign Policy."

<sup>15</sup> I fully support the argument recently put forward by Juhana Aunesluoma to this effect in Aunesluoma, "Finlandisation in Reverse."

<sup>16</sup> Békés, "Back to Europe."

cow did not really expect the harsh resistance or criticism they received from the United States because some of the countries they targeted were among the poorest in the world (e.g., Afghanistan, Ethiopia) and in most cases their geopolitical location was also peripheral in the nuclear age. We can add that in retrospect, U.S. leaders actually should have been happy to see how the Kremlin was wasting their rather limited resources without any sensible reward. The Soviet leaders, indeed, maneuvered themselves into a trap by not being able to resist the temptation to expand their influence, while by now they should have concentrated all their efforts on saving their failing “internal empire,” including Eastern Europe. Such decisions were made partly as a consequence of the absurd secrecy about the real state of the Soviet economy. We now know that even in the early 1980s, under Andropov, the state budget of the USSR with the real figures, including the military costs was unavailable even to key Politburo members, including future General Secretary Gorbachev and future Prime Minister Ryzhkov.<sup>17</sup> Thus Moscow had to pay a high price for the unprofitable (over)expansion of the Soviet empire (including the war in Afghanistan) as it became a crucial factor in the subsequent fall of the Soviet Union—together with the enormous costs of the arms race that used up the reserves of the state and the expenses of subsidizing their allies in Eastern Europe. During the Cold War, on average, the United States spent an estimated 5 percent of its GDP on military costs, while the corresponding Soviet figure was an estimated 25 percent.

### **Surviving Détente and the Emerging Common European Consciousness, 1979–1983**

The new interpretation of détente, outlined at the beginning of this chapter, emphasizing the role of compelled cooperation and interdependency also explains how it was possible that just a few years after the alleged “death/fall/failure of détente” at the end of the 1970s an unprecedented rapprochement between the superpowers occurred with the coming of Gorbachev beginning in 1985. Despite the view held by many, there was no (there could not have been a) “second Cold War” between 1979 and 1985<sup>18</sup> as this term implies that a first Cold War had ended sometime ear-

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<sup>17</sup> Blanton, Savranskaya, and Zubok, *Masterpieces of History*, 570. On the absurd nature of state secrecy in the Soviet Union see also Zubok, *Failed Empire*, 299.

<sup>18</sup> Békés, “Why Was There No ‘Second Cold War.’”

lier. Such widely accepted but erroneous interpretations assume that by the “victory” of détente between 1969 and 1975 the Cold War disappeared and then, at the end of the decade it resurfaced again until it completely melted away under Gorbachev.

Such explanations can be attributed to a linear and exclusive interpretation of the relationship between Cold War and détente. These interpretations basically apply a model according to which—with some simplification—at a certain time there was either Cold War *or* détente. That is, when the superpower relationship was bad, one can refer to this period as the Cold War, when it was good, it was détente. In fact, this relationship—as explained earlier—was not linear at all, and the two categories were certainly not mutually exclusive. They could not and did not replace each other. It is worth noting that the traditional interpretations essentially—unintentionally—follow the logic of politicians of the Cold War era. After 1953 and especially following the Geneva Summit of July 1955 Moscow and its allies were convinced that the Cold War was over at that time and that peaceful coexistence had no alternative. That is, they clearly used the two categories in an exclusive way. This is well demonstrated by cases when in their internal discourse they identified East-West conflict situations with the Cold War and they often argued that the Western powers wanted to bring back the Cold War or Cold War style into the East-West relationship.<sup>19</sup> The same logic was perceivable on the other side as well: in June 1969, when a new wave of Soviet-American rapprochement was unfolding, Henry Kissinger also spoke of the Cold War as a category belonging to the past, compared to which relations would now enter a constructive phase.<sup>20</sup>

It is therefore difficult in the conventional sense to evaluate the period between 1979 and 1985 as it was both preceded and followed by détente. It has been described as a period when the element of confrontation was dominant again, and has been “logically” named the “second Cold War,” “little Cold War,” or “mini-Cold War” using old reflexes, since this logic links a Cold War to a time when the superpower relationship was struggling. In reality, however, this was not the case. First, previously, in peri-

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<sup>19</sup> At the Soviet Bloc states summit meeting on July 31, 1972, in the Crimea Brezhnev argued that in case the opposition won the early elections to be held in the FRG in the fall, that would mean a return to the Cold War. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (MNL OL; Hungarian National Archives), M-KS 288f. 5/ 587. ö. e. Report by János Kádár at the meeting of the HSWP Political Committee, August 2, 1972.

<sup>20</sup> Keefer, Geyer, and Selva, *Soviet–American Relations*, 64: Memorandum of conversation (Kissinger–Dobrynin), Washington, June 12, 1969.

ods of confrontation, confrontational intentions (at least at the level of propaganda) were mutual, that is they prevailed on both sides. Now, however, it appeared only on the American side, while the Soviet leadership strongly insisted on the preservation of the results of détente. Second, it was the first time that in a confrontational stage the European allies of the United States did not follow Washington loyally in a united front, and indeed they sought to keep the East-West dialogue and cooperation alive. Moreover, the alliance system reacted similarly on the Eastern side as well: the Eastern Bloc countries—Hungary, primarily—driven by their special interests that were by now becoming increasingly independent of the intentions of Moscow sought to do everything they could to preserve the achievements of détente.

Between 1979 and 1985 the new confrontational U.S. policy (both under President Carter and in the first term of the Reagan administration) materialized primarily at the propaganda level while the mechanism of compelled cooperation continued to work perfectly. The need to avoid a clash between the superpowers was no less compelling than before. Reagan's policy between 1981 and 1983 can be compared to the Eisenhower administration's dual policy between 1953 and 1956, when the real aim of U.S. policy was to find a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union, but this was coupled comfortably with a high-sounding rhetoric promising the liberation of the East European "captive nations" which, as is now well-known, had no real basis at all. At the time and even for several decades, this secret could not be documented with primary sources.

Most documents from Reagan's first term will only become available in the next few years but they will in all likelihood reveal an American foreign policy line following the main direction of realism, a traditional policy based on the strategy of containment, which realized the need for compelled superpower cooperation in the same way as its predecessors did. This pragmatic attitude is clearly demonstrated in a speech by Secretary of State George Shultz on U.S.-Soviet relations in the Senate Committee for Foreign Relations on June 15, 1983, where he declared that "we are ready to respect legitimate Soviet security interests and to negotiate equitable solutions to outstanding political problems." He also deemed it important to emphasize that "our policy begins with the clear recognition that the Soviet Union is and will remain a global superpower."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> U.S.-Soviet relations in the context of Foreign Relations, Speech of Secretary of State George Shultz on June 15, 1983, in the Senate Committee for Foreign Relations. National Security Archives, Washington D.C. End of the Cold War collection, Box 1.



Thus accessible sources together with indirect evidence strongly support the above hypothesis, while from 1983 on it is already clear that the Reagan administration was seeking the resumption of superpower cooperation. While the spring of that year is mostly remembered by the public for Reagan's "evil empire speech" and the launching of SDI, newly available archival sources reveal that almost just about the same time, behind the scenes, at Reagan's initiative a special channel was established for the improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations between Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin.<sup>22</sup>

A deterioration of the Soviet–U.S. superpower relationship certainly occurred following NATO's double-track decision and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. However, for the first time during the Cold War era, this was not followed by an automatic worsening of the overall East-West relationship.<sup>23</sup> Mutually interested in preserving the results of détente, the two parts of Europe began to gravitate toward each other rather than obediently following the superpowers' confrontational line. The Soviet leaders themselves—with a short period of hesitation in the first half of 1980—were keen on preserving the results of détente.

With the invasion of Afghanistan the Soviets had calculated a certain level of criticism from the West, but had expected that after a short period of time it would be accepted as a *fait accompli*, similarly to the case of Czechoslovakia in 1968. They also believed that further improving East-West relations had no alternative so the crucial issue of keeping up the results of détente would overshadow the problem of Afghanistan fairly soon.

However, the West—especially the United States—reacted differently this time. For they rightly evaluated the situation as the first time since 1945 that the Soviet Union had militarily occupied a country that did not belong to the Soviet sphere of interests tacitly recognized by the West. While at the time of the East-Central European crises of 1953, 1956, and 1968 the West rationally recognized the Soviet Union's right to restore order within its empire, they considered the Afghan invasion to be a unilateral and aggressive expansion of the Soviet sphere of interests. According to Western interpretation, Moscow had breached the tacit agreement based on the European status quo policy which had functioned well since the end of World War II. Considering Afghanistan's geostrategic position, the acquisition of that territory violated only potential Western interests,

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<sup>22</sup> Memorandum of Conversation (Reagan, Shultz and Dobrynin), February 15, 1983. Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> For a recent edited volume on this period, see Villaume and Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*.

and the intensity of the international crisis caused by the Soviet aggression did not ever reach the level of the Berlin and Cuban crises at the beginning of the 1960s.

American countermeasures announced at the beginning of 1980—the restriction of the sale of fodder grain to the Soviet Union, freezing of cultural and economic relations, the ban on transfer of advanced technologies—had not yet caused too great a trauma for the Soviet leaders. Similarly, the fact that the UN Security Council put the Afghan question on the agenda on January 5, 1980, and then the Soviet step was condemned at a special General Assembly session did not cause any change in Moscow's foreign policy. Although the possibility of the UN keeping the "Afghan question" permanently on the agenda could later have contributed to the reinforcement of the confrontational trend within Soviet leadership, Brezhnev's speech of January 16 still unambiguously emphasized the need for the maintenance of East-West cooperation. At the same time, however, President Carter called on the whole world to boycott the Olympic Games to be held in Moscow in the summer of the same year. Because this was the first time that the Olympics were to be held in a socialist country, this event had been viewed as an important prop in gaining international prestige for the Eastern camp.

At the end of January, the situation became even more critical. Although the majority of the West European countries were not unambiguously and in every field joining the American campaign aimed at the "punishment" of the Soviet Union, the question of European security was now viewed in a completely new light as a result of the Afghan invasion. Based on NATO's double-track decision passed at the beginning of December 1979, it was still principally possible that, in the case of successful East-West talks, the deployment of the so-called Euromissiles would not take place in Western Europe. However, under the new circumstances, it became increasingly obvious that the NATO member states could not be dissuaded from the deployment of U.S. missiles aimed at the strengthening of their security. While in a number of West European countries there had been a strong anti-missile movement including not just communist sympathizers but large parts of the societies, now Moscow could no longer count on this wide scale social resistance.

In late January 1980, after the boycott of the Olympic Games was announced and especially when it became clear that there were no more chances to avoid the deployment of the "Euromissiles," Moscow became offended and decided to take countermeasures. During this campaign Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR were ordered to cancel imminent

high-level talks with Western politicians. This unexpected move caused a serious clash of interest between the Soviet Union and the East European communist states, as by this time these countries were—in different degrees and in different ways—interested in developing their own relations with Western Europe.<sup>24</sup> The Hungarian leadership, while loyally canceling their planned visits to the FRG and the United States, urged Moscow to hold a multilateral consultative meeting on the consequences of the situation in Afghanistan on East-West relations. They argued that in the present situation the allies must be consulted regularly on the joint policy of the Soviet Bloc in international politics, and the results of détente must be preserved. They also argued this would be possible only by maintaining and strengthening the relations of the East European countries with Western Europe. Further they felt this would help avoid American influence prevailing in these countries.

### A Victory for Hungarian Diplomacy and the Soviet Bloc

Brezhnev was permanently ill at that time and internal fights intensified between the lobbies within the Soviet leadership. The Hungarian proposal for consultation, however, was accepted and a meeting of the CC secretaries for foreign affairs of the “closely cooperating socialist countries” (the Warsaw Pact states without Romania) was summoned in Moscow on February 26, 1980. At the conference Boris Ponomarev, CPSU CC secretary for international affairs, not only adopted the above mentioned—and rather shrewd—Hungarian position, but he also put forward this thesis as the current CPSU line, emphasizing that “the socialist countries should make the maximum use of the possibilities contained in existing relations with the Western-European countries to counter-balance the United States' foreign policy line.”<sup>25</sup>

This was a great victory for Hungarian diplomacy as well as for the whole Soviet Bloc.<sup>26</sup> First, because they were given a green light to go

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<sup>24</sup> For the history of the intra-bloc crisis caused by the Soviet move, see Békés, “Why Was There No ‘Second Cold War.’”

<sup>25</sup> MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 47/764. ő. e., Memorandum of conversation between Vadim Zagladin, first deputy head of the International Department of the CPSU CC and Gyula Horn, deputy head of the HSWP CC Department of Foreign Affairs on debates inside the Soviet leadership on issues of international politics, July 16, 1980.

<sup>26</sup> On the history of Hungarian foreign policy in this period, see Békés's *Európából Európába* [From Europe to Europe]; “Hungarian Foreign Policy in the Soviet Alliance System”; and “Hungarian Foreign Policy in the Bipolar World.”

ahead with strengthening Western relations that were more than crucial for the country's economy by that time. If relations between the West and Hungary had been frozen in 1980, it would have potentially blocked Hungary's acquiring a crucial 1.7 billion dollar Western loan in that year. This—we now know—would have led to the country's insolvency.<sup>27</sup> From a historical perspective it is even more important that Hungarian leader János Kádár's firm personal intervention and the effective Hungarian diplomatic initiatives eventually helped the liberal forces in the Soviet leadership—mostly key members of the Central Committee apparatus—who were interested in maintaining détente, to overcome their adversaries, led by Foreign Minister Gromyko, representing a more belligerent attitude toward the West.<sup>28</sup>

In parallel with the letter sent to Brezhnev, Kádár sent explanatory messages to SPD Chairman Willy Brandt and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. In these, he apologized for the cancellation of the visit of the Hungarian foreign minister at such short notice and subtly explained the difficult situation of the Hungarian leadership. He also stressed that his country was strongly committed to maintaining the results of détente and to fostering East-West cooperation. In his reply, Helmut Schmidt, the first German Chancellor to visit Hungary a year earlier, formulated the historical challenge facing the European states in the following way: that it depended on these states—"whether they let themselves be drawn into the cold war, instigated by the two superpowers or not! Neither the FRG, nor any other West or East European coun-

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<sup>27</sup> MNL OL, M-KS. 288.f. 5/791. ő. e., Minutes of the session of the HSWP Political Committee on January 29, 1980. Published in Békés, "Miért nem lett második 'hidegháború'."

<sup>28</sup> As Vadim Zagladin, first deputy head of the International Department of the CPSU CC told Gyula Horn on July 16, 1980, "for several months in the CPSU Politburo, there had been heated debates about the Soviet Union's specific foreign policy steps, the general evaluation of the international situation and the situation of the communist movement. He emphasized that in this debate Comrade János Kádár's message to the Soviet leadership played an important role"; MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 47/764. ő. e. Memorandum of conversation between Vadim Zagladin, first deputy head of the International Department of the CPSU CC and Gyula Horn, deputy head of the HSWP CC Department of Foreign Affairs on debates inside the Soviet leadership on issues of international politics, July 16, 1980. The English translation of the document was published as part of a collection of Hungarian archival sources on the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in Békés, "Why Was There No 'Second Cold War' in Europe? The Hungarian Leadership and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979."

try can keep out of this [cold war] alone. This is possible only by the collaboration of all states concerned.”<sup>29</sup>

Thus the invasion of Afghanistan, in which the Warsaw Pact states were not involved, in fact helped amplify the notion of an East-Central Europe, pursuing its own interests and having a special identity, significantly different from that of the Soviet Union. All this, paradoxically, contributed to the gradual establishment of a *common European consciousness* that had been formulated since the late 1960s: this slowly emerging virtually united Europe would surely include East-Central Europe, but not necessarily the Soviet Union.

Soviet crisis management during the Polish crisis of 1980–81 also demonstrated that Moscow was keen to avoid another Soviet invasion in order to preserve the chance for East-West dialogue. From the outset they sought to apply the Mikoyan doctrine,<sup>30</sup> first trying to find a political solution and then a military solution executed by local forces. While Mikoyan’s proposal was voted down by the CPSU Presidium in October 1956, the Soviet leaders learned their lesson and instinctively sought to use his doctrine in 1968 in Czechoslovakia and later in Afghanistan in 1979. The first successful application of the doctrine occurred in December 1981 when General Jaruzelski introduced martial law in Poland.

The Soviet leaders learned other lessons as well. During the Euro-missile crisis in December 1983 Moscow did not repeat the 1980 mistake; namely, applying a general line of retaliation against the West. According to a guideline sent from Moscow to the Soviet Bloc leaders: “under the new circumstances it is important to approach the development of relations with the different western countries in subtle ways. The countries that agreed to the deployment of the missiles should experience the political consequences of this move. Naturally, priority should be given to countries in which no such missiles will be deployed. It seems to be useful

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<sup>29</sup> MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 11/4512. ő. e., Information bulletin for the Political Committee and the Secretariat concerning the oral reply of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt to the message of János Kádár, February 14, 1980.

<sup>30</sup> At the time of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 it was Anastas Mikoyan, a respected member of the Soviet leadership and the one who knew the Hungarian situation best who proposed a solution using local forces only: “There is no way of mastering the movement without [Imre] Nagy and so this will make it cheaper for us as well. . . . What can we lose? Let the Hungarians restore order for themselves. Let us try political measures, and only after that send our troops in.” For the first publication of the Mikoyan doctrine, see Békés, “Az 1956-os magyar forradalom,” 85.

<sup>30</sup> MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 5/897. ő. e.

to intensify our relations and contacts with the neutral countries of capitalist Europe in every respect and area.”<sup>31</sup> The Soviet policy of differentiation was now clearly aimed at maintaining dialogue with as many partners as possible in the West.

This same commitment by the Soviet Bloc states to continue the policy of détente and indeed improve East-West cooperation was demonstrated by their attitude toward the CSCE follow-up conference in Madrid from September 1980 to September 1983. As the meeting was convened in the rather strained international climate following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it was to be expected that the harsh attacks launched at the Eastern states for their human rights violations at the first follow-up conference in Belgrade in 1977–78 would now be multiplied and supplemented by the charge of Soviet aggression. From a publicity perspective it appeared a lost case for the Soviet Bloc. In such a situation it would have been logical to try to postpone or even boycott the conference to avoid a serious loss of prestige. Yet the Soviet leadership decided to follow the original agenda and enter the fight. During the conference the introduction of martial law in Poland in December 1981 further exacerbated the situation. However, by September 1983, the conference produced tangible results with agreement on several issues including religious freedom and family unification. Most important, the participants agreed on convening three important conferences: on human rights in Ottawa in 1985, a cultural forum in Budapest the same year and on human contacts in Bern in 1986.

## Conclusion

The period of the long détente from 1953 to 1991 was a continual struggle for survival for the Soviet Bloc. For outsiders this struggle seemed to be temporarily successful in the 1960s, but for the Bloc’s leaders it became increasingly evident from the middle of that decade that the extremely ineffective economic system of their regimes would not make it possible to keep up the competition with the West.

For the Soviet Bloc states, détente as a new model of East-West cooperation after 1953 was not “just” a means of avoiding a direct and fatal clash of the two blocs. Paradoxically, it was also a must for them in order to survive in the historic competition exactly with the help of their oppo-

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<sup>31</sup> MNL OL, M-KS. 288. f. 5/897. ő. e.

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nents. Relying on Western advanced technology and loans, especially from the mid-1970s on, became a crucial driving force behind the Soviet Bloc's enormous efforts to preserve the results of the Helsinki process at any price even in the turbulent period following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.





## **PART II**

# **EAST-WEST TRADE**



# Soviet Snowdrops in the Ice Age?

## The Surprising Attempt of an Early Economic Détente in 1952

*Mikhail Lipkin*

If one types the keywords “economic détente,” “peaceful coexistence,” or “tourism in the USSR” into any search engine, results will likely lead to a historical narrative with such key events as the 1955 Geneva Conference, Nikita Khrushchev, and the Moscow Youth Festival of 1957. Yet new evidence from Russian and foreign archives shows that the first massive “general rehearsal” of the Soviet Union opening itself to the world happened from April 3 to April 12, 1952. This is the story of the Moscow International Economic Conference (MIEC).

Only occasionally studied by contemporary researchers in Russia,<sup>1</sup> this event was forgotten and ignored in the West in a majority of publications on the history of international relations.<sup>2</sup> Yet despite official pressure and an information boycott by Western governments, the Conference managed to gather together 471 delegates from forty-eight countries (not counting another 84 individuals comprised of experts, advisers, observers, and guests),<sup>3</sup> including the leading capitalist countries. It was the first occur-

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<sup>1</sup> The article is an updated and expanded version (with inclusion of the GARF archive evidences) of my *Sovietskii soiuz*, 127–166. The Moscow Conference is briefly mentioned as a chain of other events reflecting the struggle within a tiny circle of Soviet leadership in Zhukov, *Tainy Kremliia*, 556; with regards to Soviet-Italian relations it is analyzed in Khormach, “USSR-Italy.” In Western historiography the only serious publication on this topic was published recently in France on the basis of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs archive sources; see Robin, “Les relations commerciales.”

<sup>2</sup> Robin, “Les relations commerciales,” 41.

<sup>3</sup> The Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (RGASPI), F. 17, Op. 137, D. 190, 348, “Svedeniia o sostave delegatov i drugikh uchastnikov Mezhdunarodnogo Ekonomicheskogo Soveshchaniia v Moskve” [Information about composition of delegates and other participants of the International Economic Conference in Moscow], April 12, 1952. A smaller figure of 450 invited delegates from forty-seven countries was mentioned

rence of a Russian-sponsored event—organized with Intourist and an army of translators, drivers, and waiters—hosted in Moscow with vast international representation that had not been seen since the beginning of the Cold War. Taking into account a series of “fact-finding” tourist tours to various parts of Russia (which various national delegations requested), the cost estimates were in excess of 7,180,000 rubles (equivalent to 1,795,000 US dollars).<sup>4</sup>

In the West this event was viewed as one more case of Soviet propaganda. The broad public effect was certainly part of the Soviet design, especially if one takes into account that this idea was first voiced in the World Peace Council. When looking at the correspondence of such bodies as the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions or the Soviet Committee for Peace one can easily find the reasoning of using such a conference for Soviet propaganda aims (disarmament for merits of trade). At the same time new layers emerge upon examining materials from the Ministry of Foreign Trade, the All-Union Trade Chamber, analytical references of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and edited texts of speeches by Soviet representatives on this Conference. A more nuanced story reveals itself.

### **The Moscow International Economic Conference**

The Conference was originally planned as a nongovernmental affair. A national organizing committee was established in each country to coordinate preparations. In the USSR the whole process was coordinated not by the MID, but by the External Policy Commission of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party.<sup>5</sup> The decisive document was submitted to the Politburo by the Commission on January 26, 1952. It was a draft of the Politburo’s resolution on preparing and conducting the MIEC with a number of supplementary documents. It stated that

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in an earlier document: RGASPI, F. 84, Op. 1, D. 59, 116, “V. Grigoryan to J. Stalin,” February 27, 1952.

<sup>4</sup> The State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 5446, Op. 86a, D. 1178, 44. “O vydache Vsesoiuznoi Torgovoi Palate iz rezervnogo fonda Sovmina SSSR 3-kh millionov rublei na pokrytie raskhodov, svyazannykh s provedeniem Mezhdunarodnogo ekonomicheskogo soveshchaniia v Moskve” [About disbursal of 3 mn. rubles from the Council of Ministers of the USSR reserve fund to the All-Union Trade Chamber to cover expenses on carrying the International Economic Conference in Moscow]. “Reference and Rough calculation of expenses by M. Nesterov,” May 6, 1952.

<sup>5</sup> It was led by Vagan Grigoryan.

a major aim of the Moscow Economic Conference is to break the trade blockade and those systems of actions on economic discrimination towards the USSR, countries of people's democracy and China which have been realized during the recent years by the US government with a rising pressure. . . . The Conference must facilitate reinforcement of resistance to US politics from certain bourgeois circles . . . at the same time the Conference must reveal possible positive sides of reconstruction and development of normal conditions in the area of trade and economic ties between countries.<sup>6</sup>

It is also worth noting that the text mentioned the necessity of opposing the politics of discrimination<sup>7</sup> to encourage wider possibilities of trade relations among the countries. Here special attention was paid to a concrete program of trade development. A certain increase in "peaceful" production, that is consumer goods industry, was mentioned. According to the document's logic, such a program should attract an essential part of trade and industrial circles from capitalist countries and thus change the economic architecture of the world. Only as a last resort the document mentioned recruiting to the peace movement "new circles of citizens on the basis of their interest in expanding economic cooperation."<sup>8</sup>

What were those trade and industrial circles? The list of companies had been updated during the preparatory process. Yet the Politburo's appendix mentioned such pillars of Western capitalism as the U.S. Trade Chamber, British Industrial Union, National Business Council of France, and the General Confederation of Italian Industry. Together with "progressive" trade unions it stated the necessity of inviting such "reactionary" organizations as the British Trade Union Congress, U.S. Trade Union of Miner Workers, and the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions.<sup>9</sup>

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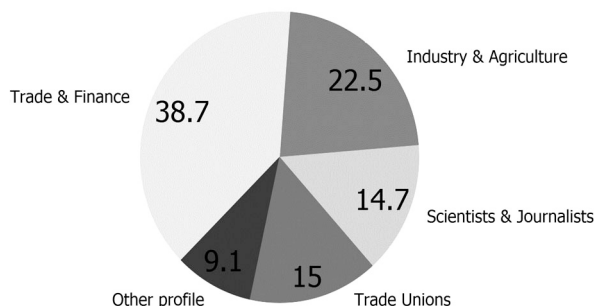
<sup>6</sup> RGASPI, F. 84, Op. 1. D. 59, 61, "Proekt postanovleniia TsK VKP(b) o podgotovke i provedeniii Mezhdunarodnogo ekonomicheskogo soveshchaniia" [Draft of a Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR on preparing and conducting the International economic conference].

<sup>7</sup> By "discrimination" the Soviet documents meant serious restrictions imposed on the Western countries through the NATO-initiated COCOM list of restricted "strategic items" for trade with Eastern Bloc countries (1949) and the extended list of restricted goods passed by U.S. Congress and known as the Battle Act (October 1952). The last one included a number of unilateral financial and economic sanctions by the United States against any country that would break this ban. This led to disagreements and sharp discussions among the NATO allies. Yet, despite sporadic violations the COCOM and later ChinaCOM (on trade with China), restrictions remained in force until the 1960s. As a countermeasure the Eastern Bloc established the Commission on Coordination of Trade with Capitalist Countries under the Bureau of CMEA. For comparative document analysis, see Lipkin, *Sovietskii soiuz*, 122–126.

<sup>8</sup> RGASPI, F. 84, Op. 1. D. 59. 62.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 63.

Figure 3.1 Professional background of delegates at the Moscow International Economic Conference (by percentage)



Source: RGASPI, F. 17. Op. 137, D. 190, 348, "Svedeniia o sostave delegatov i drugikh uchastnikov Mezhdunarodnogo Ekonomicheskogo Soveshchania v Moskve" [Information about composition of delegates and other participants of the Moscow International Economic Conference in Moscow], April 12, 1952.

It is also quite interesting to examine how the composition of participants was envisaged. One-third of the delegates were representatives from the USSR, China, other socialist countries, and the GDR. One-half of the delegates were representatives of capitalist countries, but one-third of them consisted of "progressive characters." The rest were representatives of dependent and underdeveloped countries.

Such aims demonstrate that despite the cosmopolitan design of the Conference its major thrust was undoubtedly put to the West. As documents show it was not designed as just one more gathering of procommunist forces from all over the world. The list of invitees was comprised heavily of CEOs of leading Western and Eastern corporations and business associations. The customs officers' interim report on those who finally arrived in Moscow via the border control in Prague stated that:

Political profile of delegations is very wide. As far as some of them revealed their political orientation while passing Prague, one can certify that among them there are people both of rather progressive views (even members of corresponding communist parties) and social-democrats of various colors, liberals, conservatives, even reactionaries. The predominant type was liberal and conservative.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 137, D. 790, 351, "Doklad o proезде uchastnikov iz zagranitsy na Moskovskoe Ekonomicheskoe Soveshchanie" [Report on transit of foreign participants of the Moscow Economic Conference]. "To A. Antonov," Prague, April 9, 1952.

The preparation process spiraled out of control in the British branch of the World Peace Council. The latter complained that initiatives and organization activities were decided by people outside of the Council, ignoring the organization—that is, free from any prior consultations with the Soviet side about whom to invite and how to compose the UK delegation.<sup>11</sup> The selection process was based on a professional and not an ideological basis. This allowed the British delegation, made up of twenty-nine members, to be one of the most active and influential in Moscow; it included five acting members of the House of Commons and it was led by Lord Boyd-Orr, a member of the House of Lords.

The French delegation was the largest in Moscow and included thirty-six representatives. It was led by Paul Bastid, former minister of trade, fellow of a research institute. Unlike the British delegation, two-thirds of the French party were representatives of concrete companies and business associations. According to French sources the last one-third of the delegation even included a “group of support”; among it for instance was the famous novelist Maurice Druon.<sup>12</sup>

The most representative from the point of “*persona grata*” participants were the Soviet and Chinese delegations, with twenty-six members each. The Soviet delegation was led by Mikhail Nesterov, chairman of the Presidium of the All-Union Trade Chamber, and the Chinese by Nan Hanchen, head of the People’s Bank of China. One of the smallest delegations was from the United States, whose government pressure not to attend the Conference was one of the most severe. One eclectic American participant does however stand out: Oliver Vickery. The biographical reference prepared by the Soviet authorities indicates that he was a representative of the dyed-in-the-wool overseas bourgeoisie. As a representative of the Ocean and Sea Company, allegedly seeking new markets, he was also a member of the North California International Relations Council, the Commonwealth Club, and the Masonic Lodge, as well as the Ar-

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<sup>11</sup> RGASPI. F. 17, Op. 137, D. 838, 59, “Kopiiia zapisi besed pervogo sekretariia posol’stva SSSR v Londone tov. Bruslova s Ivor Montagu” [A copy of record of conversations between the First Secretary of the Soviet embassy in London comrade Bruslov with Ivor Montagu]. “Head of the MID Second European Department V. Pavlov to comrade Ponomarev,” January 28, 1952.

<sup>12</sup> MAEF, Europe, URSS 1949–1955, Fol. 80, 173. “La conférence des économistes pour la paix,” Monsieur Yves Chataigneau ambassadeur de France en URSS à son excellence Monsieur Robert Schuman Ministre des affaires étrangères (Direction générales des affaires politiques). Moscow, April 16, 1952. Annexe 1. Liste de la participation française à la rencontre économique internationale.

tistic Club and Pacific Ocean Transport Association of which he was the president and head of the executive board. In this capacity he was invited to Moscow where he delivered a passionate speech titled "Free trade and spiritual interfluence."<sup>13</sup>

### **Soviet Objectives: Economic Détente with the West, or Wedge Driving?**

The Conference's priorities and the envisaged correlation between delegations of various countries demonstrate that a major boost from the MIEC was undoubtedly expected in relations with Western countries. The letters sent in the name of the Initiative Committee demonstrate that the West had a huge interest in Eastern markets. There are many simple letters advertising new goods and technologies as well as questions about opportunities to establish business contacts with potential partners from the CMEA countries, in particular trade areas. Although the organizers tried to stress that the Conference was not a business fair but something much more important, in reality each CMEA country (including the USSR itself) designed concrete plans to increase trade with capitalist countries and plans to establish import-export relations with particular foreign countries during the Conference. To facilitate the new business look of Soviet industry and attract foreign investors, a number of parallel international events took place in Moscow. These included the exhibition of goods and technologies as well as a Soviet fashion show.

The complex preparatory process of the Conference was coordinated by the Initiative Committee presiding in Copenhagen under the chairmanship of French left-wing parliamentarian Robert Chambeiron.<sup>14</sup> The Resolution of the Initiative Committee in Copenhagen was passed after a discussion with representatives of capitalist countries. It was due to their demands that many essential amendments were passed. For instance they insisted and succeeded in including the phrase that "discussion at the Conference shall not intervene in the political differences which today divide the participants of the Conference but bring out the issues of economic cooperation and development of economic relations with a view to reach-

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<sup>13</sup> RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 137, D. 796, 168, 176–177. "Originaly i perevody rechei" [Original texts and translations of speeches].

<sup>14</sup> Robert Chambeiron belonged to the socialist Progressive Party and was a member of the French Parliament until 1951.



ing agreement. The aim of this conference will be to seek a means of promoting peaceful cooperation between different countries and different economic and social systems. The Conference will rule out any discussion of the respective merits of a particular economic and social system.”<sup>15</sup>

Assessing the conference the French ambassador in Moscow wrote to the minister of foreign affairs, Robert Schuman, that it was “a part of long-term political maneuver.” In other words, he estimated this event as a sophisticated multipath political combination.<sup>16</sup> The conference would pursue a number of aims that could be arranged into three sets of goals according to the three working committees that oversaw the work of the MIEC.

Among other motives, the timing of the Conference (initially planned to be held at the end of 1951) gives grounds to link it with Soviet attempts to filibuster the signing of the Bonn Treaty, block the establishment of the European Defence Community, as well as complicate ratification of the Treaty on European Coal and Steel Community signed in 1951. The Conference was certainly a counteraction to the Marshall Plan and integration activities in Western Europe (the real meaning of its program session “Development of international trade”), the strengthening of the USSR’s position in developing countries and especially their role as trade relations intermediary between the People’s Republic of China and the West (session “Issues of developing countries”) and, finally, the general propaganda assault on the global politics of embargo and trade discrimination from the side of the COCOM (session “International economic cooperation as an input in solution of social problems”).

When reading between the lines, it becomes clear that the wording of Soviet documents was scripted under the cover of talk about resistance to U.S. policies of trade discrimination against Eastern Europe and China, Soviet policy-makers intended in fact to counteract the first manifestations of West European integration. During this period, using the phrase “American policy in Europe” was equivalent to saying “West European integration.” That is why counteracting the Marshall Plan stipulated counteracting the European Coal and Steel Community, ECSC (the forerunner

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<sup>15</sup> RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 137, D. 521, 174, “Conclusions of the International Initiating Committee’s Discussions,” V TsK VKPb, tov. Grigorianu [To the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, comrade Grigoryan]. English version. November 1951.

<sup>16</sup> MAEF, Europe, URSS 1949–1955, 173, Fol. 67. “La conférence des économistes pour la paix,” Monsieur Yves Chataigneau ambassadeur de France en URSS à son excellence Monsieur Robert Schuman, Ministère des affaires étrangères (Direction générales des affaires politiques), Moscow, April 16, 1952.

of the European Communities). In an analytical memo prepared for the Politburo in 1951, it was stated clearly: "Recently adopted by a number of European countries, 'The Schuman Plan'<sup>17</sup> stipulated cancellation of the Most Favored Nation principle which had been granted by its member countries to other countries in trade agreements concerning trade of bituminous and brown coal, coke, iron and manganese ore, scrap-iron, cast iron, steel, rolled metal, etc." The memo suggested promoting wide possibilities of Soviet trade with Western Europe stating that such trade would facilitate the strengthening of trade and financial potential of Western powers and give them stable orders necessary for their industry to improve the situation with employment and living standards.<sup>18</sup> It also indicated a direct connection between the Conference's arrangement and adoption of the Battle Act on June 16, 1951.<sup>19</sup>

Analysis of Soviet offers to develop trade in Moscow shows that among all capitalist countries the USSR paid special attention to three: France, West Germany, and Britain. It is interesting to note that France played a special role: Robert Chambeiron, former deputy of the French National Assembly, acting civil servant in the French Ministry of Finance, became the key figure in the Initiative Committee and later in the Committee for Trade Development. Moreover, as he stated in his welcome speech at the opening of the conference, it was Paris where representatives of business circles, trade unions, and academics first got together and the idea of such a conference originated.<sup>20</sup> The most generous offer to develop mutual trade (a five to six times increase in trade compared to the 1951 level) was also made by the USSR to France.<sup>21</sup> It can be added that com-

<sup>17</sup> In the Soviet tradition of official documents and reference materials the Schuman Declaration of May 9, 1950, is traditionally called "The Schuman Plan."

<sup>18</sup> RGASPI, F. 84, Op. 1, D. 59, 2–13, "Spravka o sovremennom sostoianii mezhdunarodnoi trgovli i vozmozhnostiakh ee rashireniia" [Reference on current state of international trade and possibilities of its expansion], "M. Menshikov and P. Kumykin to V. Molotov," August 29, 1951.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 4. Also known as the Mutual Defense Assistance Control Act of 1951, enacted in the United States to establish an economic blockade of the USSR and other East European countries.

<sup>20</sup> RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 137, D. 796, 150, "Perevod vystupleniia Roberta Chambeirona" [Translation of Robert Chambeiron's speech].

<sup>21</sup> RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 137, D. 797, 118, "Utochnennyi tekst osnovnykh polozhenii vystupleniia predstavitelia SSSR na Mezhdunarodnom ekonomicheskom soveshchanii v Moskve, podgotovlennyi s uchastiem tovarishtchei Zakharova, Arutuniana, i Cheklina" [Updated text of basics of a speech of a representative of the USSR at the International Economic Conference in Moscow, prepared with participation of comrades Zakharov,

paring pressure on participants of the Conference it was only in France that Robert Schuman, member of the government and founding father of West European integration, wrote personal letters to invited persons calling them to give up the idea of taking part in this endeavor.<sup>22</sup>

Regarding West Germany, a special program was offered to this unrecognized country as well. In a speech by N. Orlov, director of the ministry of foreign trade's think tank, the All-Union science and research market institute, a special passage was devoted to Bonn. It said that "those defeated countries in which peaceful economy's development is being hampered and which are deprived of independence in their external trade relations could take an appropriate place in development of international trade."<sup>23</sup> The head of the All-Russia Trade Chamber M. Nesterov voiced a concrete program of trade development:

Soviet external trading bodies while developing trade with the GDR on a wide scale are ready to establish trade relations with Western Germany's business circles and allocate their orders on the goods usually shipped from Germany into the USSR with a supply during the nearest two to three years to the sum up to two billion rubles. For its own part the USSR could supply Western Germany with corn, wood, ore, mineral oil and other goods.<sup>24</sup>

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Arutunian, and Cheklin], "P. Kумыkin to V. Molotov and A. Mikoyan," March 13, 1952.

<sup>22</sup> RGASPI, F.17, Op. 137, D. 790, 349. "Informatsiia o sostave delegatov i drugikh uchastnikov, pribyvshikh na Mezhdunarodnoe ekonomicheskoe soveschanie" [Information about composition of delegates and other participants arrived to the International Economic Conference]. Other capitalist countries used other means of pressure: for instance, according to delegates' stories the U.S. Government had threatened to cancel visas for participants from France, Belgium, Italy, and Holland. On January 15, 1952, NATO passed a special resolution calling the governments of member countries to use all means to reduce in quantity and quality representation of their citizens in Moscow. In March 1952, the United States summoned its own huge international conference of businessmen to counteract the Soviet initiative.

<sup>23</sup> RGASPI, F.17, Op. 137, D. 796, 147–148, "Vystuplenie tov. Orlova" [Speech by comrade Orlov], April 6, 1952.

<sup>24</sup> RGASPI, F.17, Op. 137, D. 797, 119, "Utochnennyi tekst osnovnykh polozhenii vystuplenia predstavitelia SSSR...", "P. Kумыkin to V. Molotov and A. Mikoyan," March 13, 1952.

### “Economic Cooperation” as a Path to “Peaceful Coexistence”?

Aside from the plans of opening the Iron Curtain, documents of the Conference demonstrate that the ideas of peaceful coexistence and economic cooperation were first voiced in Stalin’s later years—well before the era of Khrushchev. One of the most intriguing and mysterious facts about the Moscow economic conference is that the now well-known wording “peaceful coexistence” first appeared in drafts of the Soviet representative’s speech between January and February 1952.

It is useful to trace the development of this wording in a number of draft versions of the speech. The first version of a speech was applied as a secret supplement to the draft of the Politburo’s resolution on the Moscow Conference introduced to Stalin and members of the Politburo. Most likely dated January 26 (the same date as the Politburo’s draft) it reads:

The Soviet Union proceeds from a *possibility of peaceful coexistence of different social-economic systems* and is ready to develop trade relations with all countries and all trade and industrial circles if these relations develop on a basis of mutual benefit and strict implementation of undertaken obligations.<sup>25</sup>

In the upper right corner of this document is Molotov’s handwriting: “*the general tune is correct.*” In a February 1 version of this document the wording “*social-*” is crossed out<sup>26</sup> and the day after that the whole “*peaceful coexistence*” is struck out and replaced by “*economic cooperation.*”<sup>27</sup> The draft was not signed and its initial author or authors remain unknown.

One may suppose that as far as the document was introduced by the External Policy Commission its initiative can be connected with Vyacheslav Molotov. In 1949 he was replaced by Andrey Vyshinsky as the minister of foreign affairs but despite this he remained the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and as a former minister and Head of Intelligence (Committee of Information in 1947–49) semiofficially supervised the work of the External Policy Commission. Prominent historians of Stalinism Oleg Khlevniuk and Yoram Gorlizki have written about a certain decrease in Molotov’s influence to “second-

<sup>25</sup> RGASPI, F. 82. Op.1. D. 59. 65. “Osnovnye polozhenia vystuplenia predstavitelia SSSR na Mezhdunarodnoi ekonomicheskoi konferentsii,” February 1, 1952.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 100.

hand, propaganda and information aspects.” In the case of the MIEC and its External Policy Commission we can say that de facto this body pretended to become a center of alternative thought to official dogmatic MID policy in the USSR.<sup>28</sup> Bearing in mind that this conference was prepared absolutely autonomously from Vyshinsky, the last mentioned hypothesis has credibility.

At the same time such a courageous term could not appear without sanction from the very top of the Soviet system. The analysis of its evolution allows us to conclude that in the end this wording was considered to be premature and perhaps too dangerous. Meanwhile the connotation of “*economic cooperation*” in 1952 documents must have implied much more than just black-and-white issues of debit and credit. In its final version the text of the Soviet representative’s speech accented the following notion:

The USSR is ready to expand trade relations with all countries and all commercial and industrial circles, bearing in mind that these relations will be based on mutual benefit and strict fulfillment of responsibilities of each side. By doing this the USSR proceeds from the fact that differences between the *economic systems* cannot be an obstacle for a development of such *cooperation* between all countries.<sup>29</sup>

### **Aims of the MIEC: Framework for a Durable Economic Détente**

The Resolution of the Moscow International Economic Conference about the ways of improving economic relations between the countries stated: “It is taken for granted in theory and practice that existence of various *social-economic systems* cannot be an obstacle impeding a development of broad *economic relations*. If desired the *cooperation* can be realized on the basis of equal rights and mutual benefit on a substantial scale.”<sup>30</sup>

To achieve these aims, the MIEC suggested a number of steps. The first were political: ending the wars in Korea and Vietnam; signing the Peace

<sup>28</sup> Khlevniuk, and Gorlizki, *Kholodnyi mir*, 95.

<sup>29</sup> RGASPI, F.17, Op. 137, D. 797, 112, “Utochnennyi tekst osnovnykh polozhenii vystuplenia predstavitelia SSSR...”, “P. Kумыкин to V. Molotov and A. Mikoyan,” March 13, 1952.

<sup>30</sup> RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 137, D. 521, 97–98, “Rezolutsia Mezhdunarodnoi ekonomicheskoi konferentsii o vozmozhnostiakh uluchshenia ekonomicheskikh svyazei mezhdru stranami” [Resolution of the International economic conference about possibilities to improve economic ties between the countries], draft version, “P. Kумыкин to V. Grigoryan,” September 1, 1951.

Pact between five great powers; and reducing military programs. The second were economic: refusal of restrictions on trade of “strategic” goods with the USSR, countries of Eastern and Central Europe, as well as China; and signing the Economic Pact between governments of all countries.

The Economic Pact is in itself a very interesting document. First, it stated a need for development of international cooperation irrespective of economic development and social and political systems of the signing countries—reading as an early *détente*. Second, by trying to fix the MFN principle it included a certain passage against the ECSC—inadmissibility of putting under control the international trade of primary goods by a country [i.e., United States] or groups of countries [i.e., ECSC].<sup>31</sup> Third, it had an obligatory part: the signing countries assumed an obligation to start negotiations on matters of mutual interest no later than six months after the document would come into force.<sup>32</sup>

One of the major results of the Conference was a decision to establish the Committee for the Promotion of International Trade. Its major aim was to prepare a second International Conference on Trade, to promote the results of the first one and to transfer a Resolution of the Moscow Conference to the UN General Assembly calling for the convocation of the Intergovernmental Conference on the promotion of world trade.<sup>33</sup> Almost unbelievable is that due to the very active participation of the British delegation (led by Lord Boyd-Orr), the Polish representative Professor Oskar Lange suggested the Russians make London the resident city of this new body.<sup>34</sup> The Soviet representative and head of the All-Union Trade Chamber, Mikhail Nesterov, rejected this idea, suggesting Berlin; in the end Vienna was chosen.

<sup>31</sup> RGASPI, F. 84, Op. 1, D. 59, 21, “Sovetskii proekt Pacta ekonomicheskogo sotrudnichestva” [Soviet project of the Pact of economic cooperation]. “M. Menshikov and P. Kумыкин to V. Molotov,” August 29, 1951.

<sup>32</sup> RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 137, D. 521, 100, “Rezolutsia Mezhdunarodnoi ekonomicheskoi konferentsii...”

<sup>33</sup> RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 137, D. 792, 167–168, “Resolution proposing the convocation by the UN of an intergovernmental conference for the promotion of the world trade,” English-language version.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 203. A copy of a letter from Oskar Lange to M. Nesterov (forwarded to V. Grigoryan), May 20, 1952.

## The Early Death of a Grand Idea

Preparations for the July 25 meeting in Vienna were begun by Nesterov. On July 16, 1952, Nesterov made a secret request to Molotov asking for information about concrete examples of trade deals resulting after the Conference to use it in Vienna as a serious argument against a Western information campaign. At the top of this letter, Molotov left a handwritten note to Mikoyan: "*Please make yourself aware. Shall we make any move?*"<sup>35</sup> Anastas Mikoyan generally supervised economic issues in the USSR and requested that the Ministry of Foreign Trade prepare a draft. As the document prepared for this case by the deputy minister of foreign trade, A. Zakharov, shows, the Ministry of Foreign Trade executed Nesterov's request.<sup>36</sup> The irony of history is that because the meeting in Vienna was canceled, Nesterov never used the document; the draft was filed in the archives and became an important historical document. At the bottom of Nesterov's letter to Molotov, dated July 23, 1952, appears a handwritten note: "rescinded by a decision not to send Nesterov to Vienna."

Here we come to the strange end of this grand design. Soon after the delegates left Moscow, the Soviet side began drifting away from the activities of the Committee for the Promotion of International Trade. The first signs that the Soviet side wanted to postpone any future activities appeared while Robert Chambeiron and Oskar Lange were very active and full of enthusiasm about its future.<sup>37</sup> Nesterov suddenly came down with "diplomatic illness" and ignored all meetings of the Committee's Bureau as well as avoided taking any calls with Chambeiron. The Soviet side postponed organizing their national branch of the Committee for the promotion of international trade and paying the member fee owing despite the fact that other eastern countries such as China and Hungary had already paid theirs. According to a Resolution of the Soviet Council of Ministers from April 24, 1952, 48,000 foreign rubles were allocated as a So-

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<sup>35</sup> GARF, F. 5466, Op. 86a, D. 922, 64, "M. Nesterov to V. Molotov," July 16, 1952.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 63–61. "Spravka o kommercheskikh sdelkakh, zakluchennykh vo vremia Mezhdunarodnogo ekonomicheskogo soveshchaniia" [Reference about business deals that had been made during the International Economic Conference], "A. Zakharov to A. Mikoyan," July 28, 1952.

<sup>37</sup> According to Robert Chambeiron, the Bureau had several sittings in Vienna with active participation of Chinese delegates, but as soon as Moscow lost its interest the bureau's existence lost its glamour. The reasons of such a U-turn were unknown to him (author's interview with Robert Chambeiron by email, April 4, 2010).

viet fee for 1952.<sup>38</sup> After Vienna was selected as the headquarters Nesterov asked to make a payment. A note in Molotov's hand vetoes the request: "One shall call comrade Nesterov and tell him that this shall not be done. It is necessary to strictly obey those instructions which were given on November 15."<sup>39</sup>

Available documents do not indicate exactly what instructions were given on November 15. Their essence however becomes clear when analyzing another reply—that to a request by S. Kudryavtsev, Soviet representative in Allied Commission in Austria, on what line to take toward a suggestion to organize the Committee's meeting in Prague in December 1952 (expressed by its Secretary General R. Chambeiron). The head of the Central Committee's External Politics Commission V. Grigoryan answered in a letter to Stalin in which he informed the Soviet leader about Kudryavtsev's question and stressed his "personal position" that further existence of the Committee for trade development was not expedient.<sup>40</sup>

### **The MIEC Effect: Secret Soviet-West German Talks about Bilateral Economic Cooperation in 1952**

Even though the new international economic structures that were proclaimed at the Conference did not come into full play, the effect of the Moscow International Economic Conference stretched far beyond pure propaganda. If the "opening" of China in Moscow was well-analysed in the article by Thierry Robin, the intention of West Germany's business circles to restore pre-war economic ties with the USSR is a less known part of the story. And perhaps the major achievement of the Conference—speaking about its European dimension—were secret talks in the summer of 1952 with representatives of those German industries which played a crucial role in the development of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

Right after the end of the conference the Soviet trade representative office in the GDR became an object of careful attention from West German companies seeking opportunities to establish trade relations with the USSR, as was indicated in a special report to Stalin.<sup>41</sup> In the GARF archive one can find a small file accompanied by its translation and an

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<sup>38</sup> RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 137, D. 792, 270. "M. Nesterov to V. Molotov," November 4, 1952.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 272.

<sup>41</sup> RGASPI, F. 84, Op. 1, D. 77, 163. "To J. Stalin," July 19, 1952.



original of a letter from W. Neugebauer to Anastas Mikoyan dated May 4, 1952.<sup>42</sup> The author was a West Berliner, writing on his own blank with very interesting wording at the top: "Industrievertretungen—Interzonenhandel-Import-Export." Even more intriguingly—in the upper left corner of his blank was a logotype with an American eagle—"Member American Chamber of Commerce in Germany."

The International Economic Conference in Moscow showed that You as the head of external trade not only open new paths but set their directions. As a West Berliner, representing famous industries not only in the Federal Republic I would ask You to inform me whom I shall refer to for signing deals directly with the USSR.<sup>43</sup>

Such a high estimate of Mikoyan's role in the International Conference and beyond together with the fact that V. Molotov also referred to him for advice (as with Nesterov's request) indicate that the MIEC was seen as a new path in Soviet policy and a child of several fathers. Neugebauer's letter included a list of items for trade with the USSR (metal, chemicals, equipment, etc.) and was forwarded by Mikoyan to the Minister of Foreign Trade Kумыкин "for consideration."<sup>44</sup>

### Secret talks with West Germans in Copenhagen

In July 1952 the Soviet Control Commission in Germany received via a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany information about a desire of a group representing large metallurgic, mechanical engineering and heavy electrical companies as well as grain-importing firms from West Germany to conduct preliminary secret talks in Copenhagen about concluding trade deals with representatives of Soviet economic organizations. This was reported to Stalin by Pavel Kумыкин, the Minister of Foreign Trade. Among those companies interested were such big names as Gutehoffnungshütte, Mannesmann, Otto Wolff, MAN and Siemens—companies which had had large trade contacts with Soviet external trading organizations before the war. Moreover, according to

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<sup>42</sup> GARF. F. 5446. Op. 86. D. 23. 6. "W. Neugebauer to A. Mikoyan. Berlin," May 4, 1952.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 3. In the original German letter the wording of the key sentence was the following: "Die Weltwirtschaftskonferenz in Moskau hat gezeigt, dass Sie als Chef des Aussenhandels nicht nur Wegbereiter, sondern auch richtunggebend sind."

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

information from the Soviet Control Commission, representatives of these companies claimed that negotiations were blessed by Ludwig Erhard, Minister for Economics in West Germany.<sup>45</sup>

The USSR's Ministry of Foreign Trade prepared a memo for the Central Committee in which it recommended accepting negotiations "on the assumption that if negotiations will bring positive results, i.e., if the Germans agree to supply us with necessary goods this would be of benefit to us both from an economic and political point of view. If under the pressure of Americans West-German companies will be unable to offer us the goods which we are interested in and the deal will fail, this will play into the hand of raising contradictions between the German and American manufacturers."<sup>46</sup>

Attached to this letter was the draft of a Decree of the Council of Ministers and Directives to the Soviet delegation for these talks. Over these documents in Molotov's handwriting was written a resolution for the Minister: "To comrade Kумыкин. Comrade Stalin approved this suggestion except the point about directives which is excluded; Need this directive—listen and report. V. Molotov. 26/VII."<sup>47</sup> This meant that the secrecy of the mission was so high that the idea of written directives was abandoned, and the Minister of Foreign Trade had to "listen" to them orally tête-à-tête with Stalin, and report immediately on the outcome of the talks. Thus the idea of negotiations and composition of a Soviet delegation was approved.

Although directives prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Trade were excluded, judging from this project one can conclude that the Soviet's major economic interests were not in the import of consumer goods but in heavy equipment, machine tools, turbomachinery, pipes, etc. As for Soviet export goods, the most important ones listed were grain, oil products, industrial wood, manganese, and chrome. The document stipulated conducting negotiations on behalf of Soviet economic organizations and not the Government of the USSR.<sup>48</sup>

The Ministry suggested sending two Soviet deputy ministers of foreign trade—S. Borisov and A. Pavlov and as their assistants trade representatives in the GDR (Martynov) and in Denmark (Stepanov). Inclusion of

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<sup>45</sup> RGASPI. F. 84. Op. 1. D. 77. 168. "P. Kумыкин to J. Stalin," June 23, 1952.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> RGASPI. F. 84. Op. 1. D. 77. 169. "Proekt postanovlenia Soveta ministrov SSSR" [Draft decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR], July 1952.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 170–171. "Prilozhenie 1. Direktivy" [Annex 1 to Directives].

trade representatives must have served the aim of conducting negotiations in English and German without additional translators (due to the level of secrecy and unofficial character of the prepared contact). On August 4, 1952, the secret meeting took place in a hall of the Richmond Hotel in Copenhagen. The Soviet side was represented by two deputy ministers and trade representatives, the Germans by a group of representatives of large metallurgic and mechanical engineering companies led by Gerhard Bruns.<sup>49</sup> He made it clear from the beginning that this group represented private firms and their main task was to find out the possibilities of establishing trade relations between the USSR and Western Germany.<sup>50</sup>

As Soviet representatives wrote later in a report (retelling what they had been told by Bruns), the competent bodies of the Federal Government had learned from Nesterov's speech at the Moscow Conference that the Soviet Union was ready to restore direct economic ties with the Federal Republic. For its part the Federal Government—on the basis of reciprocity—was also ready (within the constructs of international obligations) to issue respective licenses to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and other Eastern countries with whom it already had official trade and payment agreements for a long period of time.<sup>51</sup>

Representatives of the West German companies made it clear that they were authorized by their Federal Government to make an offer to conclude a trade agreement although compensation deals with each particular

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<sup>49</sup> The German delegation was headed by Gerhard Bruns, the chairman of the "Gruppe Walzstahl" in the trade association of the German iron and steel industries. The meeting in Copenhagen and its political background is well documented in the West German archives. A detailed analysis of West German interests and motives are laid out in: Schlarp, "Das Dilemma," 259–261. According to the German documents, the West German Cabinet had actually taken a decision against this meeting, but because the Soviet delegations had already been on its way to Copenhagen, the West German group of trade representatives had gone to Copenhagen nevertheless. The West German Minister of Economics Erhard, Chancellor Adenauer, and the three High Commissioners had stressed that the nature of this meeting had to be "entirely private." Bruns himself however confided to members of Chancellor Adenauer's office that he had been urged by Erhard's ministry to intensify contacts with the USSR. After the Copenhagen meeting the German delegation informed Erhard's deputy at the Ministry of Economics that it was time to sign a trade agreement with the USSR on short notice.

<sup>50</sup> RGASPI. F. 84. Op. 1. D. 77. 179. "P. Kумыкин to J. Stalin," August 8, 1952.

<sup>51</sup> RGASPI. F. 84. Op. 1. D. 77. 186–195. "Otchet o peregovorah s predstaviteliami zapadnogermanskikh firm, imevshih mesto 4 avgusta 1952 g. v Kopengagene" [Report about negotiations with representatives of west-German companies that took place in Copenhagen on August 4, 1952]. "S. Borisov, A. Pavlov, B. Martynov to P. Kумыкин," Berlin, August 9, 1952.

company or a general agreement were also possible. At the same time they did not present any concrete list of goods to trade with the USSR. After additional talks with Soviet authorities in Germany the Soviet representatives (I. Semichastnovym, V. Semenovym, and I. Iliehevym) concluded that the West Germans were indeed interested in trade with the Soviet Union. Perhaps under the impression of the secret talks and backed by Soviet representatives in East Germany they returned to the USSR and recommended beginning negotiations with representatives of the FRG. "In our opinion," wrote Borisov, Pavlov and Martynov in their report, "one shall give consent to the Germans to conduct negotiations at the conclusion of the Trade Agreement."<sup>52</sup> They argued that if the Agreement were signed, the Soviet Union would gain both economic and political benefits, and if under pressure from the Americans the Bonn Government did not sign the agreement, this would increase contradictions between West German industrial circles and the occupation authorities.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Decision against a Soviet-West German Trade Agreement at the Highest Party Level**

Still the interpretation of the meeting on August 8 presented to Stalin by Kумыкин, Minister of Foreign Trade, differed from their optimistic estimate. It stressed the fact that according to the Ministry's view initial plans of participating West German companies were much more promising and concrete. They must have been under pressure by American occupation authorities to limit their intentions to a simple announcement of desirability to conclude an intergovernmental trade agreement or separate compensation deals without any concrete program of trade. This resulted in the statement that the USSR Ministry of Trade "considers it is inexpedient to enter into negotiations with the Germans about a conclusion of an intergovernmental trade agreement initiated by them."<sup>54</sup>

A refusal of an intergovernmental trade agreement was explained by the fact that West Germans made a reference to the existing international obligations of Bonn. According to the ministerial logic, this meant a situation that West Germany's obligations not to sell strategic goods to the socialist camp would make the exchange of goods unequal with the FRG

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 180. "P. Kумыкин to J. Stalin," August 8, 1952.

selling secondary goods and USSR strategic ones. Besides this, such an agreement would certainly mean some form of recognition of the Bonn government.<sup>55</sup> Unlike such a proposed new agreement, the existing trade accords with Poland and Czechoslovakia were concluded in 1948–9, before the formation of the FRG. The trade was conducted on a currency-free (clearing) basis following the agreed list of goods.<sup>56</sup>

Attached to the analytical reference was a draft of a short answer on behalf of the Soviet trade representative in the GDR to the leader of the West German companies. Its second version, edited by Anastas Mikoyan, suggested studying concrete trade bids and beginning trade within the frames of compensation deals keeping in mind the possibility of signing a trade agreement in the future contingent on a succession of concrete deals.<sup>57</sup> This answer had to be given to the German side both orally and in a written form but without a signature. At this point, there is no indication that the negotiations continued.<sup>58</sup> Traces of any activity in this direction are lost in the archives. Taking into account the twists and turns of inner political life in the USSR during the last half-year of Stalin's life, one can say that this period did not favor long-term fresh initiatives.

The only tangible result of the Moscow International Economic Conference for Soviet relations with Western Germany became a creation of the lobby group "Ost Kontor." Even though it did not have much success, it became a prologue to the creation of the semiofficial "Eastern Committee of German Economics" designed in December 1952 with the special task of developing trade relations with the USSR and the socialist world.<sup>59</sup>

From Soviet documents it becomes clear that Bruns and the participants of the secret meeting were under severe pressure from Bonn's Min-

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 181. The Ministry was interested only in a multilateral agreement with concrete companies and compensation deals, not general interstate accords.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 182, 184.

<sup>58</sup> Schlarp, "Das Dilemma," 261, comes to a similar conclusion. In his text he states that the contacts were "disrupted" and that at the next occasion—during the bilateral West German-Soviet talks during the East-West Trade Conference in Geneva in April 1953—neither Soviet nor German delegates mentioned the 1952 contacts at all. Schlarp assumes that the distrust over official or semi-official contacts between West Germany and the USSR held by the majority of members of the government cabinet in Bonn and by the three Western powers were responsible for this disruption.

<sup>59</sup> Archive of external politics of the Russian Federation (AVP RF) F. 757. Op. 36. P.132. D.8. 3. "O zapadnogermanskom komitete po voprosam trgovli s SSSR i stranami narodnoi demokratii" [About the West-German Committee on issues of trade with the USSR and the countries of peoples' democracy]. "A. Martynov," April 11, 1954.

istry of Foreign Affairs to drop a plan of any secret bilateral talks with the Soviets. According to unnamed sources, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, considered to be a hardliner, was described as being unaware of preparations for this meeting, while Erhard was its major instigator. The result of later pressure on all sides was that the representatives of the Union of German machine-building factories failed to come to Copenhagen.<sup>60</sup>

### An Un-timely Grand Design

Evaluation of this new episode must be put in one row with other secret trial balloons which were launched between Soviet and West German representatives and which were obviously a result of Stalin's famous note of March 10, 1952, about the revival of the Four Power talks on concluding and signing a peace treaty stipulating the creation of a single German government.<sup>61</sup> Besides discussions on Germany's political future which had its own merit, negotiations in Copenhagen centered on the key West German steel and iron companies' lobby group for the European Coal and Steel Community. This was a direct continuation of major aims pursued by MIEC.

The question which remains unanswered is this: if the conference attained such far-reaching results, what was the cause of a sudden end to a promising campaign for international trade development? The answer is not clear and deserves more thorough archival study.

One possible explanation of such an abrupt change in the Soviet stance is simply that Stalin changed his mind. The years 1952–3 were very unstable for Soviet leaders because of Stalin's illness. The 19th Party Congress in October 1952 epitomized his suspiciousness and paranoia towards the Kremlin circle. He directly accused Molotov and Mikoyan of being too soft and defeatist and stated that there was a split in the Politburo.<sup>62</sup> Both were in the Central Committee's Commission on external policy which coordinated the MIEC. It could be that Stalin viewed a closer partnership with the West as too dangerous—particularly against the backdrop of inner enemies inside his country.

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<sup>60</sup> RGASPI F. 84. Op. 1. D. 77. 195. "Otchet o peregovorah s predstaviteliami zapadno-germanskih firm, imevshih mesto 4 avgusta 1952 g. v Kopengagene" [Report about negotiations with representatives of West German companies that took place in Copenhagen on August 4, 1952]. "S. Borisov, A. Pavlov, B. Martynov to P. Kумыkin," Berlin, August 9.

<sup>61</sup> For instance see: Filitov, *Deutschland*, 138–158.

<sup>62</sup> Fursenko, *Russia and international crises*, 28–32.

Another possible explanation is that the conference did not meet the expectations of its organizers. Nesterov, in his August 1952 letter to Chambeiron (which he submitted for approval to the External Policy Commission of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party) pointed to the “official” reason for his absence at the Bureau’s meetings.

I still believe that a development of the movement for expansion of trade relations between the countries and for liquidation of discrimination in world trade, set by the governments of USA, England and other countries, will be effective only when it will be based on participation and deep commitment of large influential business circles in capitalist countries. Without this the Committee’s activities “from the top” will be fruitless.<sup>63</sup>

If we believe this explanation, this means that the real purpose of the Conference was to set in motion a mechanism of dialogue with capitalist business circles. Perhaps, it was the first large-scale attempt to initiate a dialogue with the civil societies of capitalist and third world countries with the purpose of working out a *modus vivendi* and persuading respective governments to review their discriminating trade policies. The first aim of the Politburo’s document was to counteract the trade blockade; the considerations of ideological warfare were not predominant and were of secondary concern. But this grand design failed because of a number of factors; among them were the contradiction of all of Stalin’s anti-western policies that had been pursued inside the country and attempts to change the image and offer fresh ideas outside the country. On a more narrow level, business lobby groups did not achieve their expected immediate results—although a certain foundation for future economic détente and its actors in key countries was laid.

Meanwhile, even the question of how “Stalinist” the Soviet political course was in 1951–3 is still open for discussion. Yurii Zhukov, a specialist on Kremlin inner policy claims that during the last two years of his life Stalin to a large extent withdrew de facto from real politics and entrusted the country’s management to the triumvirate of Bulganin-Beria-Malenkov.<sup>64</sup> In Zhukov’s interpretation the Moscow economic conference was part of a chain of external political efforts aimed to sof-

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<sup>63</sup> RGASPI. F.17. Op. 137. D.792. 238. “Proekt otveta M. Nesterova na telegrammu R. Chambeirona” [Draft of M. Nesterov’s answer to R. Chambeiron’s telegram]. “M. Nesterov to V. Molotov,” August 9, 1952.

<sup>64</sup> Zhukov, *Tainy Kremliia*, 548.

ten the international environment. It was meant to be a retirement from the politics of force and a manifestation of the drive for peaceful coexistence, development of consumer goods manufacturing and wider trade of consumer goods—the line which was personified by the party group of “pigeons” (with G. Malenkov at its head and A. Mikoyan one of its wings). It was opposed by the “hawks” representing the interests of heavy industries connected with the military industrial sector personified by N. Bulganin and to a great extent L. Beria.<sup>65</sup> The balance of power between these two camps shifted constantly. According to this logic the inconsistency of Soviet politics regarding the achievements of the Moscow conference was a reflection of this hidden struggle at the political Olympus of the USSR. The failure to implement in practice its results coincided with institutional changes in the Party. In October 1952, the External Policy Commission ceded its existence and was transformed into the Commission on contacts with foreign communist parties of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party. This was evidence of its limited competence and thus its secondary role for Soviet foreign policy decision-making.

A certain tactical gain of the conference was its propaganda effect, which despite the information war and boycott led to a flow of confidential correspondence (up to secret talks with West German companies in Copenhagen) with direct or indirect participation of the governments of West European countries. The conference called to life various lobbyist trade organizations in Western countries (promoting trade with the USSR and China). Yet when the balance of power started apparently changing in favor of the “hawks,” the Kremlin disowned a major part of its own initiative. In the second part of 1952 it rejected offers to develop trade of consumer goods. Attempts by West Europeans to develop trade of strategic goods were blocked by the USA. Political factors on both sides in the early 1950s turned out to be stronger than economic interests.

For the USSR it was the first “asymmetric” large-scale alternative proposal to the deepening of West European integration. Moreover, it was the first postwar attempt to open the Iron Curtain, proclaiming trade as a means of peaceful coexistence. While being of tactical benefit, it also emerged as one that made new strategic inroads in the increasingly nuanced environment of Eastern Europe in this era. The events that took place in 1952 led to ideas to create a new international trade organization and new trade conference. This became the theme song of Soviet foreign

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 551, 559.



policy in the second half of 1950s and may well have culminated in the creation of UNCTAD in 1964.

Once further relevant archival documents are opened for research, firmer conclusions may be drawn about the real chances for success of the Soviet U-turn in April 1952 and its influence on contemporaries inside and outside the USSR. However, one may assert that the April 1952 International Economic Conference in Moscow did not lead to an early economic détente and remained a snowdrop in the icy early Cold War period. Yet it became an important dress rehearsal that created prerequisites and gave theoretical and practical bases for wide-scale economic and political loosening of tensions during the classic period of “peaceful coexistence” in the Khrushchev and Brezhnev era.



# European Long-Term Investments in Détente

## The Implications of East-West Economic Cooperation

*Werner D. Lippert*

When forces that are hostile to socialism try to turn the development of some socialist country toward capitalism, it becomes not only a problem of the country concerned, but a common problem and concern of all socialist countries.

—Leonid Brezhnev (November 13, 1968)

Considering such agitation against East-West contact by the Soviet general secretary Leonid Brezhnev over the unrest in Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev's strong advocacy of trade with the West in his efforts to clinch a deal in the context of the Conference on Security and Cooperation seems all the more remarkable. Such vacillations between political confrontation and pro-trade approaches were not Brezhnev's alone, but played out in Western capitals as well, and speak to the amorphous balance sheet trade with an adversary can have on a country's foreign policy. Brezhnev's defense of the previously vilified East-West trade in front of his East bloc allies consequently seems as flippant as it seems dubious: "when we deliver our oil and gas from the heartland to the western regions [of the Soviet Union], we will be able to throw in an additional cistern to each fraternal country."<sup>1</sup> At the heart of this issue lies the question whether a cistern of Soviet oil from a Western-built pipeline bolstered the East bloc economy and thereby prolonged communism or whether the influx of Western goods and ideas introduced the very elements that caused the fall of communism. Just as the overarching politics of détente were seen by some as a catalyst for positive change while others denounced it as help-

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<sup>1</sup> NSArch, 5. MemCon, "Comrade L.I. Brezhnev with Leaders of Fraternal Parties of Socialist Countries in Budapest," March 18, 1975.

ing “the enemy,” so divided are views on détente’s economic underpinnings: East-West trade.

In its most striking form, this contradiction becomes evident in John Gaddis’s synthesis on the Cold War, in which he praises détente as a “legal and moral trap” for the Soviet Union upon which the anticommunist resistance could lay their claims, while he, at the same time, labeled Reagan as “one of the sharpest grand strategists ever” because he recognized that “only killing détente could end the Cold War.”<sup>2</sup> Embedded in this debate is, of course, the question of longevity for said détente policies as they determine which interpretation prevails and ultimately influences the determination who won the Cold War. Here, the economic underpinnings of détente, East-West trade, can serve as an excellent benchmark. For if trade flourished during the 1970s and early 1980s, it must be recognized that the architects of détente provided the basis for the end of the Cold War. Had East-West economic cooperation waned in the wake of the resurgence of politically aggressive posturing in the 1970s and early 1980s, the credits must go to Ronald Reagan for re-conceptualizing a détente that actually brought about results.

This chapter validates both views as I argue that vague and sometimes conflicting concepts of détente in the 1960s encouraged West Europeans to seek closer economic interactions with the East, facilitating a strengthening of West European-Soviet relations that survived the political turmoil of the 1970s and early 1980s. Conversely, continued politicization of East-West trade in the United States after the Yom Kippur war prevented a strengthening of economic ties with the Soviet Union to a level that could withstand or mitigate the superpower confrontations of the 1970s and 1980s. Consequently, inter-European détente efforts succeeded in facilitating a speedier and more complete opening of Eastern Europe to the West than the United States managed with the Soviet Union.

### **Superpower Détente without Trade**

Understanding Western attitudes toward trade with the East inevitably starts with understanding COCOM and the difficult task this committee had in trying to regulate “trade with the enemy.” Much akin to NATO’s attempts at coordinating Western diplomacy and military policy, COCOM’s policies underwent numerous changes. The 1950s saw consider-

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<sup>2</sup> Gaddis, *The Cold War*, 190, 217.

able Western cohesion for economic warfare against the communist bloc, leading to a straightforward approach of creating a list of restricted goods that would prevent “the enemy” from acquiring military hardware or any other technology that might help strengthen its geopolitical position.<sup>3</sup> It primarily contained nuclear and other military technologies and hardware, which all parties readily agreed on. It was the third group of items, the Industrial List filled with dual-use items that would spark disagreement due to the fact that the United States preferred a more rigorous interpretation on what constituted such items than the Europeans did.<sup>4</sup>

This changed in the early 1960s as the Cuban Missile Crisis drove home the need for nonmilitary avenues of superpower competition. Now elevated as a tool of American foreign policy, trade was to bring about the political change that military power was unable to do. For Kennedy, East-West trade meant the opening of the communist bloc for the sake of propagating Western values from the inside: a continuation of the Cold War through peaceful means. As Kennedy pointed out in a speech given at the University in Berlin, it was the personal contacts between individuals, not military might, which now should facilitate German unification.

Nor can the West ever negotiate a peaceful reunification of Germany from a divided and uncertain and competitive base. In short, only if they see over a period of time that we are strong and united, that we are vigilant and determined, are others likely to abandon their course of armed aggression or subversion. . .

It is important that the people on the quiet streets in the East be kept in touch with Western society. Through all the contacts and communication that can be established, through all the trade that Western security permits, above all whether they see much or little of the West, what they see must be so bright as to contradict the daily drumbeat of distortion from the East.<sup>5</sup>

A united Western front under American tutelage was implicit in this vision of a peaceful competition between West and East. Yet the Cuban Missile Crisis and the building of the Berlin Wall changed not only Kennedy’s foreign policy strategy. Recognizing the status quo on some level, America’s allies began to look for ways to arrange themselves with the permanent existence of the Soviet Bloc. Throughout the 1960s, then, Great Britain, France, and Italy all began to develop a more open trade

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<sup>3</sup> Adler-Karlson, *Western Economic Warfare*, 51f.; Chapman, *Export Controls*, 4ff.

<sup>4</sup> Adler-Karlson, *Western Economic Warfare*, 60.

<sup>5</sup> Office of the Federal Register National Archives and Records Service General Services Administration, *Public Papers of the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy*, 3.

policy with the Soviet Union; policies that would invariable clash with the United States interests in COCOM.

Kennedy's wheat deal of 1963 with the Soviet Union is a case in point. Faced with Western criticism, Kennedy argued that exporting grains to the Soviet Union "pretty much stands on its own" and did not involve items of strategic importance. Yet from a West European perspective the distinction of selling "acceptable" end products such as grain versus prohibited dual-use products, such as fertilizer, was a muddled one.<sup>6</sup> The only real difference seemed to availability of one in the United States and the other in Europe. Consequently, as the United States continued to export grain, Western Europe sought to export their own products, thereby creating a competition among Western allies for Eastern markets.

Kennedy's real problem was more homemade than imported from Europe, though. In his 1961 State of the Union Address, Kennedy had asked Congress "for increased discretion to use economic tools" in reestablishing ties with "the East European peoples." Yet Congressional resistance to this new approach and the subsequent politicization of East-West trade did not allow Kennedy to establish clear, predictable, and legally binding guidelines on trade. Instead, he had to resolve sensitive export issues on a case-by-case basis. Questions on what export article constituted a militarily useful commodity, what was destined for civilian use, and what technology would improve the civilian sector of the Soviet economy would plague his administration for its tenure and beyond.

The same question would plague the Johnson administration, which could neither find an in-house consensus on the issue, nor convince Congress to liberalize trade with the East.<sup>7</sup> Worse, international events and domestic rhetoric politicized the topic of export controls from an economic question to a political one. While the Johnson administration sought to liberalize trade with the East, the combination of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam and the invasion of Czechoslovakia shocked and further soured Americans' opinions toward the Soviet Union, making it impossible for the President to liberalize trade with the Soviet Union without a political quid pro quo.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, "News Conference 64, President John F. Kennedy," November 14, 1963.

<sup>7</sup> See Dobson, *US Economic Statecraft*, 156–158, for the internal conflicts between the State Department and Commerce Department over the Ball Report of December 1960, and 174–176 on the Miller Report and Congressional opposition.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

If the 1960s were marked by a tug-of-war between the White House and the U.S. Congress over trade liberalizations with the East, the Nixon White House did not force the issue for several years. Nixon, in principal, was interested in trade liberalization and even commissioned to National Security Council to study how to intensify global trade. Such trade, for Nixon, included the East bloc simply because “communist states were too powerful to ignore.”<sup>9</sup> When the study came back with insufficient references to East-West trade, Nixon sent it back for further elaboration. He even went as far as to task Secretary Clifford M. Hardin to explore economic possibilities for trade during his Eastern Europe trip.<sup>10</sup>

Ultimately, though, for the Nixon White House, East-West trade became little more than a political tool designed to continue the ideological struggle with an enemy country. The National Security Council had come to the conclusion that trade with Eastern Europe and Russia held no real benefits economically.<sup>11</sup> Lacking economic incentives, East-West trade liberalization was worth little more than a political gesture of goodwill and Nixon’s rejections of COCOM trade exemptions must be seen in this light. Communist countries remained the enemy and trade liberalization was just another carrot when the stick would not do. Assistant for International Economic Affairs in the Nixon White House, C. Fred Bergstein, summed up Nixon’s views succinctly when writing to Kissinger “I fully recognize that he wishes to avoid giving the Soviets anything at this time.” The era of negotiation, superpower détente, therefore, was one of tit-for-tat in which U.S. trade liberalization was only given in exchange for Soviet political concessions.

### **Ostpolitik with Osthandel**

The German version of détente, Ostpolitik, gained major traction when Willy Brandt became German chancellor in 1969 after managing to clinch a coalition government between his Social Democrats and the Free De-

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<sup>9</sup> Nixon, *The Memoirs*, 343–344.

<sup>10</sup> FRUS 1969–1976, vol. 3, Doc. #19, Memo, “C. Fred Bergsten (NSC) to President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger),” April 14, 1969.

<sup>11</sup> Trade with Eastern Europe (including Russia) amounted to only \$200 million annually. Lifting trade restrictions was predicted to only insignificantly increase trade volumes, partially due to a lack of Russian currency reserves, and to the fact that the Russian market was not as complementary to American goods as to Western European ones. See FRUS 1969–1976, vol. 4, Doc. #292, for “Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff” [n.d. but between April 16 and May 15].

mocrats in the German Bundestag. Disillusioned by the American-led rapprochement with the Soviet Union as mayor of West Berlin during the building of the Berlin Wall and later frustrated as foreign minister in a CDU-led coalition government, Brandt finally saw his chance of a new Ostpolitik as chancellor in 1969. To realize his vision of a united Germany through rapprochement with the East (“Wandel durch Annäherung”), Brandt needed a political opening for a real dialogue with the Soviet leadership.

His opportunity for a political dialog with the Soviet leadership came through an economic opening: West Germany would buy the only export-worthy commodity the Soviets had in abundance, natural gas, at conditions the Soviets could not refuse. This “Erdgas-Roehren” deal, finalized in 1970, accommodated the Soviet Union in every possible way. It allowed for West German technical know-how, West German steel, and West German financing to construct a pipeline to transport previously inaccessible Siberian gas to an already saturated West German energy market.<sup>12</sup> With the West German industry thus tied to the Soviet economy, East-West economic cooperation rose in status overnight. High tech and steel pipe exports were touted as a means of creating and maintaining job security for thousands of German workers. Natural gas imports were advertised as “diversification” of energy imports, creating cheap energy prices and a reliable means of making Western Europe less dependent on imports from the fickle Middle East. The wisdom of allowing a communist country to access Western high-tech products (the Soviet Union was unable to produce steel pipes that could withstand the Siberian permafrost) while at the same time bolstering its energy infrastructure never became a serious issue, as public attention focused on the political accomplishments of Ostpolitik. National security concerns over trading with the enemy and energy dependency on a hostile country never rose to prominence in West Germany.

From the Soviet perspective, the economic windfall of Ostpolitik was a deciding factor in dealing with West Germany. In March 1969, as the eighth Soviet five-year plan was coming to an end, the Soviet Union faced a drastic shortfall in agricultural and industrial production. Brezhnev, at the time having barely consolidated his leadership position in the Polit-

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<sup>12</sup> As part of this deal, a large-scale program was introduced to develop a natural gas network in Bavaria and change domestic heating systems from oil to gas with the expressed purpose of opening the previously saturated West German energy market to Soviet gas. For more details, see Lippert, *The Economic Diplomacy*.



buro, outlined the challenges of the agricultural crisis to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. "The central problem is the general increase in grain production. . . . Not enough vegetables and fruit are produced. Apparently the people's need for meat is not met by far."<sup>13</sup> Brezhnev's solution to the crisis was more East-West economic cooperation. While the Soviet Union had already reaped tangible benefits from East-West trade in the 1960s, Brezhnev outlined plans for more intense, large-scale cooperation with the West during the Warsaw Pact Conference in Budapest. In doing so, Brezhnev staked not only Soviet economic prosperity of the 1970s on East-West trade but his own political future as well.<sup>14</sup>

As a result, West Germany swiftly became one of Moscow's major trading partners and the ties established during the early 1970s were self-perpetuating, even after Willy Brandt's fall from office. During Brezhnev's and Soviet prime minister Kosygin's visit to Berlin in the fall of 1974, Schmidt recalled "the economic development of their country to be their main task."<sup>15</sup> The concept of the Soviet Union as the up-and-coming economic powerhouse gave East-West economic cooperation even more buoyancy and a life of its own. The German industry continued to lobby for import liberalizations, set up joint economic and technical cooperation commissions, and raised the available ceiling for export credit guarantees.<sup>16</sup> By 1975, West Germany had signed two more gas pipeline deals, again financed by German bank consortia to be repaid over decades to come with the exported natural gas. For West Germany, East-West trade had become a lucrative long-term investment in the Soviet economy. Relying on the future blossoming of good relations with the Soviets, it had created financial and energy dependencies that would not quickly be undone in times of crisis.

From an economic viewpoint, the starting position for the United States in 1970 was quite similar to that of West Germany: there was no real need for East-West trade at the time. From a policy point of view, the subsequent strategies could not have been more disparate: Nixon waited on Soviet political concessions by dangling economic carrots while

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<sup>13</sup> Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR [BAL-SAMPO] DY/30/ J IV 2/2 J-3021. Memo, "Rede Breshnews auf dem Plenum des ZK der KPDSU am 2. Juli," July 2, 1969, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Stent, *From Embargo to Ostpolitik*, 171.

<sup>15</sup> Schmidt, *Menschen und Mächte*, 58.

<sup>16</sup> Kreile, "West Germany," 791.

Brandt freely offered economic incentives for the hope of long term political benefits. Opponents of such a policy might argue that East-West cooperation allowed Brezhnev to combat the perpetual deficiencies in the Soviet agricultural sector more effectively than without Western help. On the other hand, Brezhnev had staked his political future on the success of East-West cooperation, allowing a previously unheard influence on the Soviet regime.

### **Kissinger's Missed Opportunity**

If the Nixon White House and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had recognized the importance the Soviets placed on trade, they certainly did not act on it when the time was ripe. Events in 1972 would have offered unprecedented opportunities to cement East-West trade as firmly as the West Europeans had done: Soviet-American summit meetings, the resolution of the land-lease issue—which previously had prevented U.S. credits for East-West trade—and Nixon's election victory all proved to be the ideal climate in which to reestablish U.S. leadership among Western countries in economic dealings with the Soviet Union.

American corporations stood at the ready to implement their own economic détente over Soviet natural gas resources. Texas Eastern Transmission Corp, Brown & Root, and Tenneco had already announced plans on November 4, 1972, to develop the Urengoiskoye gas field and transport the gas via pipeline to Murmansk from where it could be shipped in liquefied form to the Eastern United States. These companies formalized their agreement (the so-called North Star Project) in the wake of the Brezhnev visit on June 30, 1973. Earlier in the same month, on June 8, El Paso Natural Gas and Occidental Corp signed an agreement to develop a second Siberian gas venture in the Yakutsk area to supply the U.S. West Coast market.

Both of these projects, however, faced steep start-up costs. Costly liquefying procedures and a large shipping fleet exceeded the costs of the pipeline construction. Large-scale U.S. credits were necessary to start these projects and lowered import tariffs were required to make the sale economically feasible. For Soviet natural gas to arrive on the U.S. mainland at a competitive price, however, the Soviet Union would have to receive Most Favored Nations (MFN) status. The Nixon administration therefore pushed for a change to MFN status in Congress, as well as expanding the financing of the Export-Import Bank (EXIM) from 20 to 30

billion dollars to cover the considerable sums involved in both of these deals.

A Congressional committee went to the Soviet Union in December 1972 to explore the possibilities of trade and reported that lack of “MFN status, workable commercial relationships for United States businesses in the USSR, and acceptable conditions for approving large-scale U.S. governmental and private credit to Soviet-United States joint project” might bring the potential trade to a stand-still.<sup>17</sup> The most problematic of these, to the Soviets and the Nixon White House alike, was the Jackson-Vanik amendment. As the Congressional delegation observed,

Soviet officials on all levels were concerned with the attitude of the U.S. Congress on Most-Favored Nation Status for the Soviet Union. Specifically, the link between the Jackson Amendment to the East-West Trade Relations Act linking exit fees to MFN status was very much in their minds. . . . In fact, the vehemence of Soviet reference suggested that the approval of MFN may be a test case or a turning point in progress not only of commercial but of Soviet-United States relations as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

In October 1972, Jackson and Representative Charles Vanick introduced bills in both the Senate and the House that linked the question of Jewish emigration to MFN status. After Nixon’s victory of having “his” détente summit in Moscow and some Congressional representatives already proclaiming the end of the Cold War, domestic U.S. politics was ready to embrace MFN status.

With the question of economic benefits of central importance to the Soviet leadership and a determining factor in its foreign policy, it seems negligent at best for Kissinger to assure Brezhnev rather flippantly that MFN status for the Soviet Union was a sure thing. During an exploratory meeting between Kissinger and Brezhnev in Zarvidovo, Russia, Brezhnev was so eager to rid himself of this stumbling block, he told Kissinger that “all those [Soviet Jewish citizens] who want to can go.”<sup>19</sup> Kissinger, however, discarded the issue as “peripheral,” thereby allowing the issue to become a public power struggle in the United States. The fundamental issue here revolves around Kissinger’s failure to recognize the dangers of a politicization of the issue in the U.S. Congress and the shakiness upon which this superpower was standing.

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<sup>17</sup> Observations on East-West Economic Relations: USSR and Poland: A Congressional Trip Report November–December 1972, 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>19</sup> NA, NPMS, NSC Files, Box 75, folder “Kissinger’s Conversations at Zavidovo, May 5–8, 1973”; MemCon, “Henry A. Kissinger to President Nixon,” May 11, 1973.

Consequently, when the Yom Kippur war tested the fragile international détente process, no significant industrial or political lobby in the United States moderated a hawkish U.S. response on economic grounds. Nor was there any recognition on the West European allies' behalf that the United States would equally risk their economic well-being over this political crisis. The diverging structural interests of the U.S. and Western Europe became strikingly apparent. In the wake of the Yom Kippur war, anti-Soviet sentiments became so strong that Congress passed the Jackson-Vanik amendment, effectively stifling the export of Soviet natural gas and thereby ending any hopes for Soviet-American trade expansion.<sup>20</sup> In his lament over the lukewarm European response to the war, Kissinger, in his memoirs, isolated economic relations as the underlying reason.

Dissociation from us in the Middle East war was thus coupled with an attempt to opt out of any possible crisis with the Soviet Union. . . they would not risk over the Middle East the web of their economic relations with the Communist world—which grew increasingly vital to them for economic reasons as the oil crisis triggered a worldwide recession.<sup>21</sup>

It is probably one of the most striking ironies that the construction of the first natural gas pipeline between West Germany and the Soviet Union was completed in October 1973. At the same time the Soviet Union began delivering natural gas to German households, the Yom Kippur war brought East-West trade—and superpower détente with it—to a screeching halt.

After the Vladivostok Summit on November 24, 1974, with the new President Gerald Ford, Kissinger reported to the Cabinet that “the relationship in the political field with the USSR is good while the relationship in the economic field is under question at the moment.”<sup>22</sup> Kissinger blamed the Jackson-Vanik amendment as the culprit, with the “question in Soviets’ minds . . . , how dependent can the USSR become on United States domestic decisions?”<sup>23</sup> He elaborated that he feared the Soviet Union would not accept such restrictions on its foreign policy and was proven right only a week later. On January 14, 1975, he had to announce to the press that the Soviet government had informed him in writing of their cancellation of the 1972 Trade Agreement on the grounds that they could not accept restrictions on

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<sup>20</sup> Gerald R. Ford Library, James E. Connor Files, Box 3, President Ford, “Cabinet Meeting Minutes,” 1.8.75, 15.

<sup>21</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 710.

<sup>22</sup> Gerald R. Ford Library, James E. Connor Files, Box 3, President Ford, “Cabinet Meeting Minutes,” 1.8.75, 16.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

internal matters. Unlike West German détente policies, superpower détente would not be bolstered by economic cooperation.

### Stress Tests for Détente

The lack of business and industry support of détente swiftly became apparent with President Carter's focus on morality to international relations and honed in on the Soviet Union's human rights abuses. Unmitigated criticism from the White House changed U.S.-Soviet relations virtually overnight. Without significant American business interests to exert pressure on the White House, Carter essentially declared human rights improvements in the Soviet Union as precondition for détente and East-West economic cooperation.<sup>24</sup>

For Soviet leadership, this emphasis on human rights came at the most inopportune time. Détente in the 1960s and early 1970s had resulted in stimulus to the Soviet economy through barter trade and the exploration of previously inaccessible natural resources. For the second half of the 1970s, these stimuli were needed even more: After the conclusion of the ninth five-year plan in 1975, a slowdown in virtually all sectors of the Soviet economy became apparent and implied the need for stimulants to a sluggish economy. Problems continued to plague the agricultural sector where supply of fodder and grain were insufficient. The tenth five-year plan had continued with dismal progress, calling for more reliance on East-West trade. For the Soviet Union, trade had become a central means of stimulating the industrial production of the Soviet economy, keeping the Soviet population supplied with essential food items and consumer goods, while fostering the extraction of export-worthy natural resources, most notably oil and gas. Such economic cooperation, however, presented a tightrope act. Brezhnev had to use Western imports to placate the Soviet population while at the same time maintaining public faith in planned economies. This balance implied a continued emphasis on détente internationally while tightly controlling dissent domestically. Neither the Jackson-Vanik amendment nor Carter's human rights rhetoric could be tolerated, as they would upset this careful balance.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> CWIHP Virtual Archive, Russian Foreign Ministry archives, Moscow, Letter, President Carter to General Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev, February 15, 1977; translated by Mark H. Doctoroff.

<sup>25</sup> Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 268.

Carter's policies, then, widened the gap between U.S. and West European approaches to Soviet imports into a rift. East-West trade with the Soviet Union had always been heavily debated in American politics but at the onset of 1977, not even the White House espoused natural gas imports from the Soviet Union. In the midst of the 1979 energy crisis, Carter, in a special address to the American people, announced six steps to combat the energy shortfall. With the words "The energy crisis is real. It is worldwide. It is a clear and present danger to our nation," he focused on domestic solutions such as oil import quotas, new domestic oil exploration and alternative resources.<sup>26</sup> Very much like his predecessor Ford, the worldwide crisis interested Carter only so far as it would affect the United States. There was no consideration given to their Western allies or to the issue of natural gas. From a strictly American point of view, North American needs were met by local sources, and that was sufficient. Western Europe would have to find its own energy source.

And find it they did. Unfortunately for transatlantic unity, it would tie Western Europe further to the Soviet gas industry. For an Iranian Gas Transmission deal (IGAT-2), the West Germans opted for the Soviet Union as the transit country over reliable NATO allies such as Turkey, Greece, and Italy. In early 1979, when the IGAT-2 treaty was broken by the revolutionary Iranian leadership, West Europeans pursued the exploration of the Siberian Urengoi gas field instead. In a sense, the divide in trade policy among the Western allies had come full circle as Western Europe now bankrolled the exploration and development of the very Soviet gas fields that U.S. companies had been prohibited from developing for political reasons in the mid-1970s.

European dissent toward Carter's policies manifested itself most strongly during Carter's proposed grain embargo. When Radio Kabul announced the replacement of President Hafizullah Amin on December 28, 1979, with Soviet crony Babrak Karmal, Carter condemned the invasion as "a grave threat to peace" and promised to consult with the allies on what to do.<sup>27</sup> Instead, in his State of the Union Address on January 4, 1980, he unilaterally declared a grain embargo as the most effective way of punishing the Soviet Union. Subsequently, Carter added export restric-

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<sup>26</sup> Jimmy Carter, "Crisis of Confidence," televised speech, July 15, 1979, as cited in *The American Experience*, accessed online: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/carter-crisis/>.

<sup>27</sup> David Cross, "Soviet role in Kabul threat to peace, Mr. Carter declares," *The London Times*, December 29, 1979, 1.

tions on high tech items for oil and gas deliveries, an export ceiling on grain deliveries, an export stop on fertilizers, and limits on Soviet fishing rights in U.S. territorial waters.

With many other suppliers available for grains and high tech items, cooperation between the Western allies was deemed crucial to the effectiveness of the embargo. Consequently, Carter sent out letters to France, Great Britain, Italy, Germany, and Canada on January 11 reiterating his message of Soviet aggression from his State of the Union speech and reminding them of the importance of their commitment to the embargo. "Failure on our part to respond adequately to the Soviet action in Afghanistan can only encourage the Soviets to take similar moves elsewhere."<sup>28</sup> He followed this up with a letter to German Chancellor Schmidt, demanding concrete German actions "in its extensive economic relationship with the USSR which would complement United States measures." He asked for a severe restriction of German loan guarantees for trade with the Soviet Union and a tightening of export controls through COCOM, arguing that controls "should be expanded to include technology critical to the modernization and expansion of the Soviet industrial base." Lastly, Carter pointed to his own actions in limiting exports, such as the cancellation of steel deliveries by American companies ALCOA and ARMCO, and hoped that Western or Japanese companies would not take over the projects American companies had been prevented from fulfilling.<sup>29</sup>

Carter's call for sanctions fell mostly on deaf ears. West Europeans only acquiesced to embargo goods with immediate strategic significance. The core of West European-Soviet economic cooperation, such as the construction of steel plants, chemical factories, or aluminum production plants would not be affected.<sup>30</sup> When Carter pressured his European allies to sacrifice this economic cooperation during the summit meeting in Venice, in June 1980, the Europeans rejected Carter's demands outright and complained about "being nagged and incorporated as America's '51st state.'"<sup>31</sup>

Concerned over being caught in the middle between an ideological Carter bent on punishing the Soviets for Afghanistan, and Brezhnev,

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<sup>28</sup> Carter Library, Telegram, NSA Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders, Germany, Federal Republic through Guatemala, Germany, Folder: "Federal Republic of: Chancellor Schmidt, 1-2/80." Sec State to Ambassador FRG, sub: "Presidential Message to Chancellor Schmidt," January 11, 1980, 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> "USA: Gilt nicht mehr," *Der Spiegel*, March 24, 1980, 129.

<sup>31</sup> "USA: /Europa: 'Wir haben die Schnauze voll,'" *Der Spiegel*, June 30, 1980, 100.

backed into a corner by an ill-designed move on Afghanistan, European statesmen emerged as the arbiters between the superpowers. Giscard d'Estaing, first, and then Schmidt visited with Brezhnev to rectify Carter's confrontational diplomacy. In a triumph for European diplomacy, Brezhnev finally agreed to take up talks again while the German press repeatedly quoted Carter's helpless response to the initiative "and what are we doing now?"<sup>32</sup>

In the intense climate of the 1980 election campaign nothing happened to the embargo. Having to choose between following a weakened and erratic Carter or following a European style détente, American allies opted for the latter. The embargo was dead, even before President Reagan lifted it on April 24, 1981. By October 1980, there was a clear recognition that West European compliance with high-tech export controls were either not kept or circumvented by using a noncommunist country as a middle man.<sup>33</sup> With export control "really a 'West-West' problem" and Western Europe and Japan able to produce commercial high technology comparable to that of the United States, COCOM had become "more a monitoring mechanism than control mechanism."<sup>34</sup> More important, though, West Europeans had united in opposition to American foreign policy and in support of a continued European détente the minute East-West economic cooperation had been threatened. This message had been muddled, however, by Carter's erratic leadership style and the involvement of many other grain-producing countries. President Reagan, however, would hear the same message more clearly only two years later.

### Ronald Reagan's Vision of Détente

With President Reagan's rise to the White House it was not just East-West economic cooperation that had outlived its usefulness. The entire idea of détente was discarded. As Reagan's quipped, "détente is something that a farmer has with his turkey until Thanksgiving Day." This applied on both the political level and the economic one. Even in his 1976 bid for the

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<sup>32</sup> "Nach der Moskau-Reise von Helmut Schmidt: 'Das lief in Moskau—Zucker!'," *Der Spiegel*, July 7, 1980, 2–3.

<sup>33</sup> Remote Archival Capture (RAC) NLC-12-49-10-7-7, Letter, "Dana I. Robinson, General Manager Exclusitrade to NSC Member Brigadier General William Odom," Subject: Export Control over U.S. Technology to USSR, October 19, 1980, 3.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 5–6.



presidency he had joined Carter in criticizing the cooperative nature of East-West trade. With the rise of America's New Conservatism in the 1980s, East-West trade would become re-politicized in the United States.

U.S. Congress highlighted the dilemma of Western Europe's dependency on Soviet fossil fuels. One solution Senator Percy suggested during a subcommittee hearing on energy on October 14, 1981, was to utilize American coal reserves to meet European energy demands. However, he qualified this solution by indicating that "American railroads and ports, without major expansion, would have difficulty satisfying European energy needs."<sup>35</sup> Senator Cohen then summed up the tone of the meeting succinctly, explaining that the United States "does not have a coherent Western policy in dealing with the Soviet Union—not on trade items, certainly not on energy items." In an almost clairvoyant statement he predicted that "the Soviet Union will be in a position . . . of having drawn them [West Europeans] into a sphere of influence where they cannot afford to be antagonistic or in any way participate in embargoes, boycotts, or expressions of disapproval of Soviet conduct wherever that may take place."<sup>36</sup>

Cohen's fears came true with the establishment of martial law in Poland on December 13, 1981. Having learned from Carter's mistakes, President Reagan chose not to upset American farmers by sustaining a grain embargo again. Instead, on December 29, 1981, he called for Western solidarity in implementing an export ban on oil and gas technology and equipment. The West Europeans could not muster enthusiasm for a unified Western response to the crisis that would only penalize Europeans. Instead, the structural asymmetries between Western Europe and the United States essentially allowed this one-sided ban to unite West Europeans in opposition to the United States. In his memoirs on the crisis Helmut Schmidt quoted French foreign minister Claude Cheysson and his rhetorical question: "[Why] should we punish ourselves with sanctions just because there are developments in Eastern Europe that one cannot accept?"<sup>37</sup>

Following a brief Franco-German summit on January 14, 1982, the Schmidt government announced that it would allow German companies to

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<sup>35</sup> "Soviet Energy Exports and Western European Energy Security," Hearing before the Subcommittee on Energy, Nuclear Proliferation, and Government Processes of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, October 14, 1981, 2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 3–4.

<sup>37</sup> Schmidt, *Die Deutschen*, 260.

undercut the effects of U.S. sanctions on the Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> The following NATO meeting resulted in little but vague language to “identify” and “examine” potential trade sanctions. Chancellor Schmidt’s response to an interview with U.S. journalist William Safire is very telling in this regard. Upon the statement that the pipeline deal was very important, Schmidt replied: “No, it is not. You [the U.S.] have not given us a single gallon of oil, and you can’t do it, or of gas. You cannot do it. So we have to diversify.”<sup>39</sup> On January 1, 1982, only two days after Reagan’s call for a boycott, Mannesmann Corporation signed a new pipe order with the Soviets and on March 11, a somber West German government disclosed that it had approved \$517 million of federal loan guarantees to cover the sale.

Politically, West Germany engaged in some face-saving measures. Upon pressure from the Reagan administration, the West Germans postponed the regular meetings of the joint commission for economic affairs with the Soviet Union for nine months. However, once the commission was back in session, they immediately reinvigorated West German-Soviet cooperation with the proposition of the Yamal natural gas pipeline to Western Europe. On July 13, 1982, a West German bank consortium signed an agreement to grant \$1.6 billion in credits to the Soviets for the construction of the 3,500-mile Yamal-pipeline, with the German government guaranteeing 85 percent of the financing.<sup>40</sup>

Heated arguments between the two NATO allies demonstrate the diverging structural trade interests between the United States and West Germany. Reagan had learned from Carter’s embargo that boycotting grain exports would hurt his popularity domestically. For the Europeans, a failure of the well-entrenched Osthandel would cost West Germany 200,000 jobs, and threaten bankruptcy of major German banks and corporations.<sup>41</sup> The escalating disagreement that ensued over the construction of this pipeline demonstrated just how deep the rift between the United States and Western Europe had become. Ultimately, the Reagan administration had to capitulate and allow the West Europeans to pursue their national interests and continue West European détente with the Soviet Union.

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<sup>38</sup> “France, W. Germany Take Stand on Poland,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 14, 1982, A6.

<sup>39</sup> William Safire, “Helmut’s Pipeline,” *New York Times*, February 19, 1982, A 31.

<sup>40</sup> Dusko Doder, “West Germans Grant Soviets Pipeline Loan,” *Washington Post Foreign Service*, July 14, 1982, A1.

<sup>41</sup> John Vinocur, “Many Are the Ways to Measure Allied Trade with East Bloc,” *New York Times*, Jan 17, 1982, E3.

## Conclusion

Reagan's about-face in 1985 away from his hard-liner stance and his subsequent cooperation with Mikhail Gorbachev was certainly the inauguration of the final days of the Cold War. The end of this global conflict, which some détente advocates had already proclaimed in the halls of U.S. Congress in 1972, would not come about for nearly two more decades. Despite détente policies emerging subsequent to the near-disaster of the Cuban Missile Crisis in the early 1960s, numerous factors, domestic and international, in the East and in the West, prevented a sooner resolution to this struggle.

What this chapter has demonstrated is that East-West trade played a key factor in inaugurating and solidifying détente policies. In Europe, where trade prevailed, political agitation was moderated by economic interests. Whether it was physical proximity, a sense of helplessness in the face of superpower politics, or simply visionary statesmen, détente in Europe was embraced and bolstered by trade all throughout the critical years of the late 1970s and early 1980s. This long détente with its long-term infusion of Western technology and ideas undoubtedly made East European economies evermore dependent on Western credits, and ultimately demonstrated the inability of the Socialist system to deliver the goods and services enjoyed in Western Europe. It is hard to imagine that the Polish food riots of 1981 or the Monday demonstrations in Germany of 1989 would have happened quite this way without the influx of Western ideas through détente.

Conversely, it seems that the import of grains from the United States and the West European development of Soviet natural resources and its ability to monetize them on the world market had a positive impact on the Soviet economy and might have prolonged its ability to sustain its troubled agricultural sector. Even so, continued politicization of East-West trade in the United States after the Yom Kippur war prevented a strengthening of economic ties with the Soviet Union to a level that would allow the United States to influence the Soviet regime positively during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Consequently, inter-European détente efforts, bolstered through trade, succeeded in facilitating a speedier and more complete opening of Eastern Europe to the West (economically and intellectually) than the U.S. managed with the Soviet Union through superpower détente.



**PART III**

**THE INEXTRACTABILITY  
OF EXTERNAL AND  
DOMESTIC SECURITY**



# No End to “Political Ideological Diversion”

## The Stasi Perspective as Circumstantial Evidence for a Long Détente

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This chapter analyzes the ongoing détente process in Europe between the late 1960s and the end of the 1980s via the lens of the Stasi mechanism in East German society. By examining the workings of the Stasi during this time—their *modus operandi* and their ways of circumnavigating multilateral agreements—we observe a kind of “negative exposure” that demonstrates the continuing impact of East-West détente on both East European societies and the autocratic regimes within the Warsaw Pact.<sup>1</sup>

Western concepts around East-West détente aimed to transform communist rule within the Warsaw Pact states through a multiplication of contacts, communication, and cooperation at all societal levels. This was by no means restricted to governmental and diplomatic contacts but was meant to include various economic, academic, and cultural exchanges. The West German strategy for détente, known as *Ostpolitik*, even exceeded those goals in that it aimed to draw the citizens of the two German states closer together, projecting the possibility of reunification in decades to come.<sup>2</sup>

After a series of bilateral treaties in the early 1970s, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)—in which both the United States and Canada also participated—codified a set of behavioral rules and defined fields of future cooperation between the two antagonistic societal systems. These included economics, military, and security affairs,

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<sup>1</sup> A much more detailed version of this chapter, particularly with regard to the interconnection between military détente and human rights provisions in the late 1980s is published in Bange, *Sicherheit und Staat*.

<sup>2</sup> On East Berlin’s knowledge about the long-term goals of *Ostpolitik* and East German reactions, see Bange, “The Stasi Confronts.”

as well as human rights and humanitarian aid. The multilateralization of détente was meant to institutionalize this antagonistic cooperation<sup>3</sup> between East and West, thus making it virtually “irreversible.” This irreversibility, it seems, was greatly helped by a multitude of political and economic dependencies—between the client states and their superpowers (at least as long as the superpowers had an interest in this process) and between the smaller and medium-sized states in the East and the West.

By signing the CSCE’s Final Act in August 1975 in Helsinki, the SED-regime (Socialist Unity Party) in East Berlin also accepted the provisions of the so-called “Basket III,” including the principle of freer movement of people, information, and ideas.<sup>4</sup> This was exactly what the controllers of East Germany’s society—the officials from the Ministry for State Security (MfS or Stasi)—feared most. By 1958 the Stasi had already developed its concept of “Political Ideological Diversion” (PID). All PID actions within the GDR were considered enemy actions against the GDR’s communist society coordinated in the West, particularly by the Federal Republic of Germany. This understanding of PID meant that every individual who criticized the political realities in East Germany had to be an “agent” of the West and therefore would and could be prosecuted.<sup>5</sup>

The consequences of détente and the CSCE for the daily work of the State Security were nothing short of momentous. The CSCE proved to be an ongoing and ever expanding process until 1989–90. The follow-up conferences<sup>6</sup> produced a never-ceasing flow of provisions that needed to be translated into state law. These involved the rights of foreign journalists reporting from and on the GDR, access of East Germans to foreign and particularly West German media, and many more possibilities of con-

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<sup>3</sup> The term “antagonistic cooperation” was used by Habermas to define one specific form of “communicative action” (Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*). The term and the underlying concept were introduced to Cold War historiography by Gottfried Niedhart et al. See, for example, the contributions by Gottfried Niedhart, Oliver Bange, and Stephan Kieninger to a volume edited by Bange and Lemke, *Wege zur Wiedervereinigung*. See also the review of Werner Link, “Antagonistische Kooperation—Die Bonner Republik und der SED-Staat unter den Bedingungen des Ost-West-Konflikts,” *FAZ*, December 2, 2013, 8.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of the Helsinki Final Act, see <http://www.osce.org/mc/39501>.

<sup>5</sup> See Engelmann, “Politisch-ideologische Diversion,” 67f.

<sup>6</sup> Belgrade in 1977/78, Madrid 1980/83, and Vienna 1986/89, as well as the Scientific Forum in Hamburg in 1980, and the Mediterranean Forum in La Valletta in 1979, the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Stockholm 1984/87, the Forum on Human Contacts in Bern 1986, and the Conference on Conventional Troops in Europe 1989/90.



tacts between the Germans in both states. The methods of observing, channeling, and limiting these contacts had to become much more refined. Personnel and time-intensive operations for "decomposing" the social environment of key opponents soon replaced the established and more direct methods of repression.<sup>7</sup> This in turn led to a marked increase in State Security personnel during the late 1970s.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the 1980s, this high level of personnel was maintained and even expanded, as was the ministry's official and clandestine control of domestic, public, and private affairs.<sup>9</sup>

In this situation, a "second Cold War"<sup>10</sup> followed by a true "break-down of détente"<sup>11</sup> would have greatly facilitated the complex tasks faced by the Stasi. Yet instead, the Helsinki, Madrid, Vienna, and Stockholm-"effects"<sup>12</sup> complicated the shielding of the GDR's society from undue Western influences to such an extent that this became virtually impossible.

<sup>7</sup> See Bange, "The GDR in the Era of Détente." These findings were confirmed by Harnisch, "Die DDR im KSZE-Prozess."

<sup>8</sup> According to Gieseke and Hubert's *Die DDR-Staatssicherheit*, 86, between 1969 and 1975 the number of Stasi employees increased from 40 000 to about 60 000. According to Walter Süß, between 1970 and 1979 the number of Stasi officials increased by 67 percent, and the number of unofficial collaborators (informants or IMs) within the GDR by 22 percent. Süß, "Der KSZE-Prozess der 1970er-Jahre," 333.

<sup>9</sup> Müller-Engbergs, *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*. The number of informal collaborators (189,999, as estimated by Müller-Engbergs) has recently been questioned by Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, who cited MfS statistics for 1988 (110,000 IMs). Kowalczyk, *Stasi konkret*.

<sup>10</sup> Halliday, *The Making*. See also Gassert, Geiger, and Wentker, *Zweiter Kalter Krieg*.

<sup>11</sup> This term is widely used by diplomatic historians and focuses on superpower relations. See the contributions in Nuti, *The Crisis of Détente*. Nuti himself concedes a "return of the Cold War."

<sup>12</sup> So far publications by political scientists or historians on the "Helsinki effect" or "CSCE effect" exclusively point to the societal dimension of the CSCE process. Prominent proponents of this human-rights school of CSCE-historiography are Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect*; and Snyder, *Human Rights Activism*. However, the contributions to the volume edited by Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975*, point to multiple and often interlinked forms of CSCE impact on communist regimes and societies, which were much more complex and did not only involve increase and support of dissidentism within the countries of the Warsaw Pact. The chosen terminology hints at this by referring to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe that took place in Geneva/Helsinki (1973–75), its follow-up conferences in Madrid (1980–83) and Vienna (1986–89) and the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe in Stockholm (1984–86).

## From Cold War to Détente: New Challenges for the Stasi

During the first years of bilateral détente, 1969–1973, the Stasi was clearly preoccupied with the international dangers inherent in the new Ostpolitik. The increasing dynamics of East-West cooperation, it was argued, were threatening to isolate the GDR leadership within the Warsaw Treaty, especially if it upheld its doctrine that a combination of East European demands had to be fulfilled by Bonn before formal relations could be envisaged. The SED's aging leader Walter Ulbricht repeatedly asked his comrades in Moscow for continuing support in this respect.<sup>13</sup> But by early 1969, the Soviet leadership under Leonid Brezhnev had already decided to pursue a different policy toward the West in general and the FRG in particular, based on a new reading of Lenin's principle of "peaceful coexistence."<sup>14</sup> Although the SED leadership was acutely aware of the potential dangers stemming from a foreign policy based on détente and more rapprochement, it had to follow the course set out by the Soviet Union. East Berlin could not establish its own *Westpolitik*, not even with the FRG.

Already in October 1969, when the new coalition government under Willy Brandt took office, the head of the MfS foreign intelligence department was quick to state his security concerns. Markus Wolf correctly predicted those terms of political change that could endanger the GDR and isolate it within the Eastern bloc. He drew attention to the changes that Bonn's new Ostpolitik would bring to East-West relations and the challenge it meant for the socialist states. He cited Brandt's intentions as "rolling up the GDR from the back."<sup>15</sup> From the outset the MfS had no doubts that the FRG's intention was to use a European Security Conference "in the hope of identifying [a] means of overcoming [the status quo] in the long run."<sup>16</sup> This conclusion was reported to the

<sup>13</sup> Jarzabek, "'Ulbricht-Doktrin' oder 'Gomulka-Doktrin.'" Selvage, "The Warsaw Pact and the German Question." Bange, "Ostpolitik as a Source." The argument is reflected in Stoklosa, *Polen und die deutsche Ostpolitik*.

<sup>14</sup> Lenin saw "peaceful coexistence" as a temporary tactic for the reconstruction of the Soviet Union after World War I. Once strengthened, the efforts for building socialism and the pursuit for world revolution would be much facilitated. Brezhnev's explanations before the 24th Party Congress of the CPSU on "peaceful coexistence" as the basis for détente with the West and above all with the USA appear in contrast more defensive and more focused on securing the status quo. See Lenin, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 45, 63ff. for Brezhnev's speech, see Breschnew, *Rechenschaftsbericht*.

<sup>15</sup> Cited in Suckut, "Probleme mit dem 'großen Bruder.'"

<sup>16</sup> BStU: HVA 153, Information No. 1066/69, 10.12.1969, paraphrasing a memorandum by West Germany's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This information was rated as highly sen-

political leadership in both East Berlin and Moscow on December 10, 1969—a mere two months after the coalition of social democrats and liberals had seized power in Bonn. This document further informed the SED leadership that the mere anticipation of a European Security Conference (later dubbed the CSCE) was already showing disintegrating effects within the Warsaw Pact and that Eastern states—above all the Soviet Union—had begun to define and pursue their own national interests.

Yuri Andropov, head of the KGB, also began to reevaluate this situation. He admitted that the "idea to liquidate the GDR is recognizable" and "it is clear to us that convergence—and Brandt recommended this line—is synonymous with the liquidation of socialism." But he made it clear that the Soviet Union did not share the GDR's aggravated security concerns. Instead, Andropov proclaimed: "there will be no changing of principles whatsoever in the politics of the Soviet Union in dealing with West Germany." With this, Andropov displayed a distinct superpower perspective, far aloof of the much narrower concerns in East Berlin. In a global framing, Ostpolitik appeared as a minor evil, particularly as it promised to stabilize the situation in Central Europe—at least for the moment. Furthermore, the soft powers, on which Western détente strategists banked, held little value for decision-makers in Moscow, obsessed with the ratio of military hardware. Two further factors determined Moscow's lower risk estimate: the ideological belief that the future belonged to communism, and the geographical and linguistic distance that shielded the Soviet empire from West European influences.

Within the Warsaw Pact the USSR's leadership was not the only one eager to establish better relations with Western states, particularly with the FRG. While Soviet hopes for grand-scale economic-industrial cooperation projects proved to be much exaggerated, no other Western state at the time could offer comparable economic benefits for détente—or "peaceful coexistence" as it was termed within the communist bloc.<sup>17</sup> On December 8, 1969, the MfS informed the GDR's political leadership that Poland, Hungary, and Romania were intending to use the CSCE for "opening a wider range of possibilities for the expansion of trade with the West" and

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sitive as the copies prepared for the Polish, Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Soviet colleagues were not forwarded but "destroyed."

<sup>17</sup> On the economic aspects of détente and West Germany's special role in this, see the contribution by Werner Lippert in this volume.

that the Polish comrades were no longer willing to fight for global recognition of the GDR according to the standards of international law.<sup>18</sup>

MfS reports helped Ulbricht and his successor Erich Honecker understand that a European Security Conference would force the GDR to open up to the West and thereby to demands for political change. In mid-December 1969, East German intelligence reported an internal explanation by West German Chancellor Willy Brandt on his strategy. Due to the "anxieties of the foreign partners" there should be no more public talk about "unification" or "reunification."<sup>19</sup> Instead, the next step would be to eliminate "the GDR's function as a barrier [against contacts to the West] within the socialist camp." The "European Peace Order," which Brandt obviously envisaged as a product of the European Security Conference, would then allow for "more relaxed interaction with each other" and the successful pursuit of a "more national policy." The proposal for a European Security Conference therefore both posed and enhanced several dilemmas for East German leaders: they were torn between the wish to further intensify economic relations with West Germany and greatly expand the GDR's external relations with the drive to further legitimize internal communist rule and uphold domestic stability.

### **Anticipating the Worst: Stasi Preparations against "Diversive" Consequences of Détente**

At the end of 1971 and the beginning of 1972, GDR officials were left with no illusions as to the dangers inherent in the dynamics unleashed by East-West détente. However, at the same time and apparently under increasing Soviet pressure, the GDR's leadership no longer attempted to change the rules of the CSCE, but instead focused on limiting and preventing possible repercussions on GDR society. The Ministry set out to obtain as much information as possible on the aims and negotiating positions of the participating states (including the GDR's own allies); to combine these details into a prediction about the likely outcome of the CSCE;

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<sup>18</sup> BStU: HVA 156, Information No. 1260/69 "about Polish, Hungarian and Romanian positions with regard to the European security conference," December 8, 1969. Out of the "befriended services" only the KGB received a copy.

<sup>19</sup> BStU: HVA 157, Information No. 1306/69 "about a speech by Brandt on questions regarding West German foreign and domestic policy during an extraordinary meeting of the SPD party council in West Berlin," December 19, 1969.

and—last but not least—enact precautionary measures on the basis of this anticipation.

In November 1972 the GDR's minister for State Security Erich Mielke had to explain the new situation, the goals of the GDR, and the new strategy of the MfS to his officials. Mielke was acutely aware of the new dilemmas with which the MfS would be confronted in an era of multilateral détente. His handwritten notes mirrored his state of mind: while the highly visible negotiations between Western and Eastern leaders suggested an image to a wider public "as if the class struggle has vanished,"<sup>20</sup> Mielke remained convinced that more contacts across the Iron Curtain meant that the "fight is gaining in intensity in Europe." He observed that détente had raised hopes for more freedom of travel and contacts—and that therefore domestic criticism on the restrictive policy of East German authorities was mounting. He was also concerned with the centrifugal effect of détente: he observed "envy" in Poland, "nationalistic" policies in Romania, and a certain "liberalization" in the CSSR. Only four months later, in talking to his officials, Mielke disguised his concerns behind a more optimistic "can-do" approach. The espionage department of the MfS had correctly identified the main objective of the West: the introduction of the concept of a "freer movement of ideas, persons and information" into the final CSCE document. Mielke informed his officers that "further improvement of the internal security and order [and] a further consolidation and strengthening of socialism in our states" were now needed.<sup>21</sup> This demanded a dual strategy of refined internal control and preventive action based on early intelligence about Western plans for "diversion."

Apparently undeterred by East German anxieties and predictions, the Soviet leadership remained determined to bring the CSCE negotiations to a successful conclusion. In effect, there might even be a historical irony buried in this MfS action regarding the CSCE: the details of the East German reports about Western negotiating positions were duly forwarded through the KGB to the Soviet leadership. This certainly helped the Soviets steer the CSCE toward its Final Act, which was to play an important role in the demise of the GDR later on. It soon became obvious that the obligations agreed to in the Final Act would have a considerable impact

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<sup>20</sup> BStU: SdM 1423. Handwritten notes by Erich Mielke "Orientierungspunkte Z.K. Tagung." Because Mielke refers to the sixth meeting of the Central Committee that took place July 6–7, 1972, the notes can be dated to early July.

<sup>21</sup> BStU: BdL 5700, speech by Mielke at the Central Service Conference of his ministry on November 16, 1972.

on the GDR and other socialist states. Only a few days after the signing at Helsinki, Erich Mielke gave orders to use “every available and suitable means” to prevent “the enemies of détente and imperialistic circles to abuse the conference results for their own goals directed against the GDR and other socialist states,” thereby “motivating politically unreliable individuals within the GDR to commit enemical-negative actions.”<sup>22</sup>

Anticipating the outcome of the CSCE, Mielke had demanded and received more reconnaissance, surveillance of his own population and foreigners traveling into the GDR, as well as more restrictions on all levels of society, including research projects, publications, and even more control and “education” of important “cadres” with access to sensitive state secrets. By the summer of 1975, the Ministry for State Security had successfully adjusted—at least by its own account—to the new domestic challenges. Setting out to comply with the letter rather than the spirit of the Helsinki agreement, Mielke developed and implemented a strategy and infrastructure that would allow his party to maintain control and stability under the new circumstances—or so it seemed.<sup>23</sup>

### **No Breakdown of Détente in Europe**

The gap implicit between the Stasi’s fight against internal consequences of the “CSCE-process”<sup>24</sup> and the GDR’s interests in trade and technological exchange as well as in international recognition and in reducing the threat of a military confrontation between both alliances not only continued to exist over the following fifteen years but increasingly widened. In the preceding months the SED’s leadership had begun to criminalize all activities of GDR citizens however slightly connected with the Helsinki Final Act. The details of this new strategy for repression had been discussed in the Ministry for State Security at the end of April 1977. The new measures were covered by changes in East German law and thus seemingly even complied with the provisions of the Final Act. Once again, the necessity for this scheme was not argued on the basis of dissat-

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<sup>22</sup> BStU: HV VI—6298, letter by Mielke to all departments and services within his ministry on the occasion of the signing of the CSCE Final Act on August 6, 1975.

<sup>23</sup> See Bange, “The Greatest Happiness of the Greatest Number.”

<sup>24</sup> In this argument the term “CSCE process” is not so much understood in its diplomatic meaning (describing the series of CSCE follow-up and special conferences), but as a cipher for the complex of cross-block effects deriving from East-West interaction in the fields of economics, social and security policies.

isfaction in one's own population, but was instead justified on the grounds of an apparent "widening and intensification" of "enemy activities in the ideological field"—above all accusations of "alleged human rights violations" in the context of the forthcoming CSCE.<sup>25</sup>

The top echelons of the MfS were informed that the CSCE process necessitated these changes in law and practice. The definition of criminal acts had to be changed, simply because many citizens of the GDR, critical of the regime ("perpetrators"), referred to the Helsinki Final Act and thus "consciously calculated on staying beyond the threshold of criminality in the outer appearance of their acts." To circumnavigate this, "provocative demands for leaving the country or moving elsewhere" were prosecuted under a new criminal act, defining the "public disparagement of state order" as a criminal offence. This strategy for criminalizing dissenters (thus no longer covered by the Final Act) was also behind the order to try every GDR citizen in contact with or even working for human rights organizations—for espionage. Organizations such as these were generally defined as instruments and cover organizations of Western intelligence services.<sup>26</sup>

Applications for family reunions—mentioned in the Helsinki Final Act—were now "internally always to be treated as illegal attempts."<sup>27</sup> East Germans who submitted such applications, were tried and sentenced for violations against the East German border regime. But the CSCE process made even this "practice and efficiency" of "differentiated measures by the state and the society for the preemptive avoidance and reduction of attempts to move elsewhere" obsolete within a few years. Already in July

<sup>25</sup> BStU: ZKG 3648, "Summary of the explanation of Comrade Lieutenant-General Beater before the heads of the departments II, VII, IX, XX, agitation, legal advice and ZKG," April 28, 1977. The general context is provided in Scholtyseck, "GDR Dissidents," 296f. The ZKG (Central Coordination Group) was founded in 1976 as a direct reaction against growing Western influences as a consequence of détente. It was meant to coordinate Stasi measures against Ostpolitik- or CSCE-related actions of East German citizens. See the booklet by Eisenfeld, *Die Zentrale Koordinierungsgruppe*.

<sup>26</sup> Bruno Beater listed the following organizations in West Germany: Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte, Vereinigung der Opfer des Stalinismus, Arbeitsgemeinschaft 13. August, Bund Mitteldeutscher Jugend, Bund freies Deutschland, Ostpolitischer Deutscher Studentenbund, Studentischer Arbeitskreis Mitteldeutschlands, Institut zur Bekämpfung von Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der DDR, Notgemeinschaft Freier Berliner, Koordinationsbüro Brüsewitz-Zentrum.

<sup>27</sup> BStU: RS 291, Directive No. 34/77, dated March 8, 1977, of the Chair of the Council of Ministers of the GDR (Willi Stoph) cited in the memorandum "Considerations concerning consequences for further action by the GDR with regard to the Concluding Document of the CSCE follow-up conference in Madrid," Berlin, July 1983.

1983 in Madrid, the CSCE member states granted their citizens the right to submit applications for family reunions, promising each other they would treat these cases “favourably” and “in the same spirit” and to decide upon these cases “within six months.”<sup>28</sup> The officials in the Ministry for State Security immediately and quite realistically predicted that the East German state would soon be faced with a wave of applications for emigration as well as new possibilities for public campaigns against human rights violations in East Germany.<sup>29</sup>

Fears concerning the trade cadres with contacts to the “non-socialist economy” were triggered by the rapidly increasing number of travelers and visitors to and from the GDR. While former Chancellor Brandt canvassed for visa-free travels in Sofia before the Bulgarian communist leadership (much to the annoyance of the MfS<sup>30</sup>), Brezhnev accused Erich Honecker of letting too many West German cars into the GDR. Brezhnev even raised Honecker’s lower estimate to 4.5 million per year. After all, the Kremlin leader argued: “What do they bring? With the cars comes the ideology.”<sup>31</sup>

Another consequence of the ongoing multilateral détente was the growing accessibility of Western media, particularly West German television in the GDR. Because the Helsinki Final Act—and in its wake numerous unilateral and Warsaw Pact announcements—foresaw a “freer and wider dissemination of information,”<sup>32</sup> a simple blocking of broadcasts or a complete prohibition of Western print products was no longer possible. The new situation was highly “complex”<sup>33</sup> because of the multilateral character of the obligations but also due to the linkage between the diplomatic, social, security, and economic dimensions of the entire process. As with the other fields mentioned, the only way left for the MfS to counter-

<sup>28</sup> Concluding Document of the CSCE follow-up conference in Madrid, September 6, 1983, available at <http://www.osce.org/mc/40871>. The paragraph on “human contacts” explicitly set out that application for family reunions were not to lead to retributions in the fields of “employment, housing, residence status, family support, access to social, economic or educational benefits.”

<sup>29</sup> “Considerations concerning consequences for further action,” Berlin, July 1983.

<sup>30</sup> BStU: HVA 81/2. “as this would conform with the CSCE” (Brandt). Information survey on foreign policy No. 26/78, June 26, 1978.

<sup>31</sup> SAPMO: DY 30/J IV 2/201/1226, protocol of the meeting between the party and government delegations of the GDR and the USSR, Moscow, October 6, 1975.

<sup>32</sup> Codified in Basket III.2 (information). The Helsinki Final Act is available at <http://www.osce.org/de/mc/39503>.

<sup>33</sup> The following citations are taken from Beater’s explanations, April 28, 1977.



act this ongoing challenge posed by Western media was to focus on more indirect measures, widening and refining them.

One interesting tactic the MfS employed was to "win back" East German emigrants in the West and lead them back to the GDR. Once returned, they were to explain via East German television and radio how Western organizations had tricked them and then misused them for media campaigns against the GDR. Meanwhile within its own country the Stasi displayed double standards with regard to the international obligations signed by representatives of the same party, whose "shield and sword" it was meant to be. Stasi officials continued to hinder the work of Western journalists, to limit the availability of printed products from the West, and to criminalize Western television and radio stations (such as Radio Free Europe) as well as individual Western journalists for violating the provisions in the Helsinki Final Act. They alleged that Western media misused the CSCE provisions in their reports from and to the GDR, in order to "enhance the influence [of the West] on the population of the socialist states."<sup>34</sup> They felt that the American stations in particular, operating from West German territory, would portray themselves "in public as instruments for the exchange of opinion and information under the CSCE Final Act"—while in fact aiming at the "liberalization of the socialist states" by appealing to the Eastern public.

In 1978, after East German authorities had expelled Lothar Loewe, one of the first West German television correspondents accredited in the GDR, the journalist published a booklet on his experiences in the East only months after his expulsion. The title referred to many East Germans' habitual watching of the West German eight o'clock news. He aptly called it: "The class-enemy comes in the evening."<sup>35</sup> This seemed to confirm what party cadres in East Berlin had suspected and what the State Security had fought against for a long time, namely that "political ideological diversion" was a concerted action by the West to subvert the socialist societies in the East. Despite this official party line, large parts of the public (including those in the GDR) understood the hindrance of journalistic work as in breach of the "spirit of Helsinki." At the same time decision-makers in East Berlin were kept well-informed about the differences within the Bonn government with regard to "possible sanctions against measures of the GDR against FRG correspondents."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> BStU: HVA 75, Information No. 57/79 "concerning measures for intensifying the activities of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)," February 6, 1979.

<sup>35</sup> Loewe, *Abends kommt der Klassenfeind*.

<sup>36</sup> BStU: HVA 81/3, Information survey on foreign policy No. 38/78, September 18, 1978.

## Early 1980s: Security Interests in Central Europe and Continuation of the CSCE Process within the GDR

One—if not the most—important factor for maintaining the level of antagonistic cooperation between East and West in Europe in the midst of the so-called second Cold War<sup>37</sup> between the two superpowers was the 1980 CSCE follow-up conference in Madrid. During the 1980s East German diplomacy pursued a self-announced “peace policy.”<sup>38</sup> This had been coordinated with Moscow and consulted upon within the Warsaw Pact and it was meant to play to the interests of the West European NATO members in continuing détente with the East against those of the Reagan administration—while at the same timing enhancing communist influence on and within the West German peace movement. The Madrid conference seemed to offer just the right platform for the official part of this strategy. Not least to deflect from anticipated Western attacks on human rights issues, Honecker proclaimed in both Western and Eastern media that the CSCE process should help to stabilize the volatile political situation, ought to include the military field and would thus effectively secure “peace and détente” in Europe.<sup>39</sup>

The Stasi continued to monitor the negotiations in Madrid under two guises: the external security of the GDR and the instruments for the Party’s projection of power within its own state. Despite misgivings MfS officials had against the CSCE dynamic, the ministry loyally continued to provide East German as well as Soviet negotiators with key background information obtained in the West. In certain ways, Stasi officials seem to have acted in a state of cognitive dissonance: while ministry officials were acutely aware of the increasing difficulties that the CSCE process brought upon their state and party, they also had to support the negotiation teams of the Warsaw Pact, including the Soviet one, which in the late 1980s came to agree to policies that were most dangerous to the GDR. The reactions to the disarmament proposals, with which Leonid Brezhnev appealed to the NATO states in his speech during the 26th Congress of the CPSU,

<sup>37</sup> Even before Ronald Reagan reintroduced the term “Cold War” during his presidential campaign in 1979, it was Erich Honecker who praised the CSCE as an instrument against any “second Cold War.” Erich Honecker, *Unsere Dokumente geben Antwort auf Fragen des Heute und Morgen*, speech delivered on February 14, 1976 (Honecker, *Reden und Aufsätze*, 214).

<sup>38</sup> For Honecker’s “peace policy,” see Bange, “Keeping Détente Alive.”

<sup>39</sup> Speech delivered by Honecker, “On recent questions of the domestic and foreign policy of the GDR,” October 13, 1980 (Honecker, *Reden und Aufsätze*, 433).

were a telling example of the complexity of this kind of information and the interests and orders under which the MfS acted. In the midst of public controversy in West European societies over NATO's dual-track decision, the General Secretary of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union proclaimed a "programme for peace." This entailed negotiations over substantial confidence-building measures covering the entire European part of the USSR, the renewal of bilateral negotiations about strategic (ergo global) nuclear weapons with the United States, and a moratorium against the deployment of new nuclear missiles of the intermediate-range class in Europe.<sup>40</sup> For Moscow, which had already begun to deploy substantial numbers of SS-20 missiles in Europe, this temporary freeze offered distinct advantages.

Shortly after the official presentation of Brezhnev's proposals in Washington and other NATO capitals, the "Information Survey on Foreign Policy" (a weekly compilation for Honecker) reported that they had triggered serious differences in the West.<sup>41</sup> At the CSCE in Madrid, representatives of smaller NATO states such as Belgium, Denmark, and Greece<sup>42</sup> were infuriated by the uncompromising attitude shown by the U.S.; the government in Bonn was already fearful about the texture of the alliance and many in the SPD's parliamentary party interpreted Brezhnev's initiative as a "sign of weakness"—that the West had to seize either benefits in the "German question" or further intensify one's own armament efforts. According to East German intelligence, only Egon Bahr seemed to argue in favor of a positive reply to the Soviet proposals. These would be "clever and timely," while American politics represented a mere "show of force": "If the USSR would behave in a similar fashion to the USA, then 'we all would already have entered the next war.'" Only two days later, Erich Honecker advised Klaus Bölling—a trusted confidant of the Chancellor in Bonn and the new Permanent Representative of the FRG in East Berlin—that West Germany ought to take up Brezhnev's offer in earnest.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The 26th CPSU Congress was held in Moscow on February 23–March 3, 1981. Brezhnev delivered his speech on February 23; his proposals were officially presented to the U.S. administration on June 3. See Tichonow, *XXVI. Parteitag der KpdSU*; Breshnew, *Rechenschaftsbericht des Zentralkomitees*. For the importance of Brezhnev's "programme for peace," see Inosemzew, "Der XXVI. Parteitag der KPdSU."

<sup>41</sup> BStU: HVA 12, Information survey on foreign policy No. 11/81, March 16, 1981.

<sup>42</sup> For an analysis of the role and perceptions of smaller NATO states, see the contribution by Poul Villaume in this volume.

<sup>43</sup> Conversation between Bölling and Honecker, 18.03.1981, East Berlin. Edited in: AAPD 1981, Doc. 77.

In the first half of 1981, the MfS drew the Party and state leadership's attention to the interplay between the deepening crisis in Poland, the discussions at the CSCE follow-up conference in Madrid about human rights and the freedom of information, and the increasingly difficult conditions for East-West trade. While one priority was to keep the Polish "virus" away from the GDR's socialist society, if this could not be accomplished, then the society had to be immunized against it. In case of a military intervention in Poland, diplomatic, political, and above all economic measures by the West had to be anticipated. This would indeed have endangered the GDR's economic lifeline, as at the same time the USSR undertook dramatic cuts in the delivery of cheap raw materials to its allies. This coincidence provided the West and particularly the West Germans with surprisingly effective economic leverage. Faced with the threats in and against Poland, West German banks withheld credits urgently required by the GDR. Economic recession led to a global shortage of money, and at the end of 1981 East Berlin was even faced with a complete stop of credits for the East German economy. "Hard" currency could now only be obtained through negotiations with Western governments and particularly with Bonn—who all too soon became aware of this instrument, linking credits to a variety of demands on East Berlin and other Eastern capitals. These included restraint in dealing with Poland, a mandate for a European conference on arms control and disarmament to be negotiated in Madrid, and a viable respect for the liberty rights of individuals as agreed upon in the CSCE process.<sup>44</sup>

The compulsion for trade translated into a compulsion for détente—a détente that did not only refer to security political dealings with the West but which also contained a relaxation of rule within GDR society.<sup>45</sup>

The Mediterranean Forum of the CSCE, held in Malta's capital Valletta in early 1979, performed a similar function for the perpetuation of the antagonistic cooperation between East and West under changing global conditions. In football-speak one might say that the Mediterranean Forum carried the ball to the Scientific Forum in Hamburg in 1980, which in turn produced an assist for the follow-up conference in Madrid starting at the end of that year. Despite the intensifying conflict between Washington

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<sup>44</sup> BStU: HVA 12, the paragraph is based on information surveys on foreign policy from 1981 (Nos 1, 2, 14, 20, 23, 25, 29), May 1–July 27, 1981.

<sup>45</sup> According to a detailed study of the legal history of the GDR, this interconnection between the foreign and domestic policies of the SED regime did indeed stop an already planned tightening of East German penal law and even led to a partial relaxation of repression. Raschka, *Justizpolitik im SED-Staat*, 305.

and Moscow, the dialogue between the Europeans did not cease during these months—and therefore there was no de-coupling of security interests, economic objectives, and societal norms as agreed in Helsinki. One reason for this was that the Mediterranean Forum of the CSCE appears to have served the geopolitical interests of the Warsaw Pact and particularly of the USSR at the time. Central and Eastern Europe became an integral part of the dialogue, which the member states of the (West) European Community intended to initiate with neighboring states in the Mediterranean and particularly with the Arab states.<sup>46</sup> Gearing up to the event, neutral and nonaligned states demanded the United States cease its military activities in the region for the time of the conference. All of this provided Moscow and its allies with new room to maneuver and new diplomatic roles to be played.<sup>47</sup>

The first "Scientific Forum" of the CSCE, held in Hamburg in early 1980, turned out to be an unemotional and unideological event—as indeed the West German organizers had planned it to be. The West Germans had taken special care in choosing topics for the agenda that the scientists from socialist countries could conceivably transfer back into their own societies and regimes. The social sciences and humanities were particularly suitable in this respect as research in these fields was already influencing the societal policies of countries in the West. West European governments and above all the Federal German government nourished high expectations from academic exchanges in these fields, and, as the Stasi was quick to find out, what resulted was an enhancement of the self-esteem of eastern academics, a perpetuation and expansion of these academic contacts, and growing pressures for reform within communist-ruled societies.<sup>48</sup> In early 1980—and thus apparently at the peak of the proclaimed "second Cold War"—the Scientific Forum of the CSCE was understood as a public demonstration of the will of Europeans from the East and the West to continue dialogue and cooperation across the blocks.

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<sup>46</sup> BStU: HVA 82, "On the CSCE experts meeting on the Mediterranean in Malta," information survey on foreign policy No. 12/79, March 19, 1979. The Forum took place between February 13 and March 25, 1979, in Valletta.

<sup>47</sup> BStU: HVA 84, reports "On the Western attitude on Malta's preparations for the CSCE expert forum on the Mediterranean," "On the preparations for the CSCE expert forum on the Mediterranean," "On the CSCE meeting," in Current Information Surveys Nos. 3/79 and 5/79, January 22, February 5, and March 19, 1979.

<sup>48</sup> The contacts between West and East German institutes for policy consulting (SWP, BIOst, IPW, IIB) did indeed intensify immensely during these years of renewed super-power conflicts. See the contribution by Sabine Loewe-Hannatzsch in this volume.

However Bonn and Western Europe were not to be mistaken for “the West.” The breakdown of diplomatic détente between the superpowers threw a long shadow over even the Scientific Forum of the CSCE member states. West European states and particularly those governed by social-democratic parties hoped for a concluding document that could help elongate the academic dialogue between East and West, something that the CSCE in Madrid might even turn into a formal obligation for all participating countries. Accordingly, governments in Western Europe were determined to avoid the “dangers of ideological and polemical exchanges.” U.S. delegates tended to see things in the very different light of deteriorating superpower relations. For them, the Helsinki Final Act itself represented the maximum that could possibly be obtained, and which therefore had to be saved from “toning down and watering down.” The Americans argued that one could only obtain something from Moscow if the global public continued to exert pressure on the Soviet leadership.<sup>49</sup>

### **The Follow-Up Conference in Madrid: Slow Perforation of the Internal Structures of SED Rule**

The new head of the U.S. delegation at the Madrid conference, Max Kampelman, pursued a modified approach in the negotiations, in which confrontations with the East over questions of human rights played only a limited role. Initially however, the Stasi’s experts—in their triple role as intelligence gatherers in the West, support for the East German delegation in Madrid and an instrument for internal control—had predicted a rather different scenario. The analysts in East Berlin foresaw rather different positions within the Western camp. They expected that the “realistic political forces” in the French and West German governments would argue for restraint in human rights issues, while in the end the Americans would push through their “anti-socialist strategy of confrontation and blackmail.”<sup>50</sup> This latter strategy was, according to MfS documents compiled in support of the East German delegation in Madrid, geared toward “inter-

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<sup>49</sup> The citations are taken from a report of the MfS foreign intelligence department (HVA). In this, the HVA paraphrased West German sources, most likely the protocols or summaries of the preparatory meetings for Hamburg held between the West German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the BIOst and the DFG. BStU: HVA 77, Information No. 343/79, June 8, 1979.

<sup>50</sup> BStU: HVA 1054, material on the 1980 CSCE follow-up conference in Madrid.

ference" into the domestic affairs of the GDR. In other words, it was assumed that the cold warriors in the U.S. administration would try to influence East German citizens "by official political-diplomatic means under the pretext of assessing and controlling Basket III of the Final Act."<sup>51</sup> Therefore, the authorities in East Berlin anticipated strong Western demands for more emigration, more family reunions, and more freedom to travel. Above all, under U.S. leadership the West would try to depict the "penal law and the legal policies of the GDR as a prosecution of people with dissenting ideas and a breach of fundamental human rights." The fear of such a negotiation strategy by the West at least forced East German officials to deal with a human rights survey on the GDR, compiled by the West German "Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte" (who the MfS thought to be in close contact with the CIA and West Germany's BND). In a painstaking exercise the Stasi checked every single case of "political prisoners in the GDR" listed in this survey.<sup>52</sup>

With this and other human rights reports surfacing as well as the heightening crisis in Poland, the West European and particularly NATO states linked their participation in the conference to three conditions: an elaboration of the human dimension of the CSCE in the long run; an agreement for a viable conference on confidence-building measures and disarmament in Europe (CDE); and restraint and abstention of force by the Warsaw Pact states in their dealings with Poland. When the Polish crisis came to a head, the delegates from NATO countries who were assembled in Madrid broke their silence and began discussing Polish affairs within the CSCE framework.<sup>53</sup> It seems in fact that the Soviet government was initially interested in a rapid success of the negotiations. From early on in the negotiations, their delegates agreed to far-reaching compromises

<sup>51</sup> BStU: HA IX-2380. The citation is from the mutual dissertation of Lieutenant Colonel Möller, Major Jaskulski and Major Osterloh, "Political and international legal aspects of the work of the MfS for the offensive rebuttal of interference in the domestic affairs of the GDR by state organs and enemy centres in the FRG," submitted at the Legal Academy of the MfS in Potsdam in April 1980.

<sup>52</sup> BStU: ZKG 22. Memorandum by the Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte (eds.), *Menschenrechte in der DDR—Bestandsaufnahme vor dem Folgetreffen der KSZE in Madrid* am 11. November 1980, Frankfurt/M, 15.10.1980. Attached is a list of MfS action thereon, 07.01.1980.

<sup>53</sup> According to MfS information, the head of the U.S. delegation in Madrid had proposed to bring the Polish issue into the conference as early as December 1980 (during the preparatory talks). Back then, the other NATO countries had deemed the warnings contained in the communiqué of the NATO Council on 12.12.1980 to be sufficient. BStU: HVA 12. Information survey on foreign policy No. 1/81 from 05.01.1981.

in the field of human rights and contacts.<sup>54</sup> Now however, a complete breakdown of the CSCE negotiations in Madrid in case of an invasion in Poland had become a distinct possibility—even though this would have meant the loss of Soviet concessions on human rights for the West.<sup>55</sup> While neither of these scenarios—the invasion of Poland or the end of the CSCE—actually occurred, the conference was nevertheless adjourned from March to November 1982 when Soviet pressure on Poland did not cease and the country was placed under martial law.

The common interest of the Europeans in meaningful confidence-building measures—meaning more security from surprise attacks through more transparency about troops, dislocation, and maneuvers—proved to be the important glue holding the Madrid negotiations together and eventually yielding a success despite the temporary adjournment. Enlarging political détente to encompass the military sphere was meant to be accomplished by a common decision in Madrid to convoke a special CSCE conference on disarmament in Europe. Western supporters of this idea—above all the French and the West Germans—knew about the personal interest that the ruler in the Kremlin had displayed in this project.<sup>56</sup> No reason for “exaggerated expectations” was to be given to the public.<sup>57</sup> In his speech before the 26th CPSU Congress in March 1981 Brezhnev expanded on this idea, offering to place all European territories of the USSR under CBM regulations, putting the hitherto uncompromising position of the U.S. administration into question. Only now the head of the U.S. delegation to Madrid, Max Kampelman, succeeded in obtaining consent from the White House for linking the American focus on human rights to the interests of the Central Europeans in stabilizing the existing military antagonism.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> This is also suspected by Hanisch, *Die DDR im KSZE-Prozess*, 280, and Fesefeld, *Der Warschauer Pakt*.

<sup>55</sup> BStU: HVA 12. “On the meeting in Madrid,” Information survey on foreign policy No. 25/81 from 29.06.1981.

<sup>56</sup> Europa Archiv Bd. 2 (1980), D49–D55. Brezhnev’s proposals for an extension of CBMs were included in the communiqué of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact on December 6, 1979. BStU: HVA 12. West German knowledge was confirmed in Information survey on foreign policy No. 2/81, January 12, 1981.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., “Western opinions on the concluding document of the meeting in Madrid,” information survey on foreign policy No. 7/71, February 16, 1981.

<sup>58</sup> Albeit only under the condition that Moscow would accept the territorial framing of CBMs contained in the French draft. BStU: HVA 12, information survey on foreign policy No. 15/81, April 20, 1981. See also Kampelman, *Entering New Worlds*, 244; Minnesota Historical Society: Kampelman Papers, Box 15, memorandum January 9, 1981



In the end, the conference in Madrid led to a smooth perpetuation of the CSCE-process, to an expansion of the CSCE-process into military détente (including arms, deployment, and doctrines), to a new "reengagement" of both superpowers in security affairs and to significant improvements in the fields of human contacts and the freedom of information and opinion. As already mentioned, with its signature in Madrid the GDR's government made a commitment to decide on its citizens' applications for family reunions and cross-wall marriages within six months. The habitual sacking of applicants from their workplaces was explicitly ruled out in the Concluding Document. Furthermore, from now on East German authorities had to provide their citizens with the correct forms and inform them about their right to re-submit their applications. In addition, the Madrid Document granted protection to all those peace and dissident groups that acted under the roof of churches: paragraph 10 of the principles declared that every member state recognized the "freedom of the individual to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, religion or belief acting in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience." This nightmare scenario for the ruling party in the GDR and its watchdogs in the MfS was completed by the admittance of "freer and wider dissemination of printed matter" and obligatory visa- and work-conditions for foreign journalists.<sup>59</sup>

The Warsaw Pact states existed on the basis of Communist Party rule and domestic repression, from which followed that the more relaxed party rule became, the more the viability of the respective state was put into question. This paradox was at the heart of the dilemma faced by East European capitals. The changes resulting from multilateral détente and the CSCE process began to turn the tables against these states and especially against the GDR. This was particularly true for those Warsaw Pact states closest to the Iron Curtain, whose societies were especially prone to Western influences. Thus the GDR's "peace policy" necessitated a certain relaxation of harassment against the developing and church-centered peace movement within East Germany.<sup>60</sup> In turn, the temporary relaxation of active measures (observation and control were continued in turn or even

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from Kampelmann for the Reagan administration. On Kampelmann's important role, see Stephan Kieninger's contribution in this volume.

<sup>59</sup> The Concluding Document of the CSCE follow-up in Madrid is available at <http://www.osce.org/mc/40871>; BStU: HA IX-13893. In August 1983 the MfS compiled a synopsis comparing the provisions within the Helsinki Final Act and the Madrid Concluding Document. The results—as expected—were alarming.

<sup>60</sup> See Nehring, "Für eine andere Art von Sicherheit"; and Eckert, "Auf dem Weg zur Friedlichen Revolution."

intensified) sufficed to allow the until-then rather unconnected groups to form a network. And it was this network of addresses and telephone numbers—and the trust that kept these small groups together—that became a key factor in organizing the mass demonstrations within East Germany in the fall of 1989. The MfS sensed as much already in the summer of 1983 and—regardless of Madrid or world opinion—staged a renewed clamp-down on these dissidents. But by then it was too late. Only three years later East German peace groups, coordinated by Pastor Eppelmann and others, participated in the discussions<sup>61</sup> leading up to one of the most renowned documents of the pan-European peace movement. Their memorandum “Breathing real life into the Helsinki Accords” was made public on the eve of the CSCE follow-up conference in Vienna in November 1986<sup>62</sup> and contained demands for a security policy “from below” and for a dissolution of the “block structures.” Without civil rights there could be no sustainable security in Europe—that was the essence of the appeal translated into many languages. When Mielke read the memorandum, he immediately initiated the prosecution of the East German signatories, among them Eppelmann and Markus Meckel. Despite Mielke’s condemning analysis his orders remained without any tangible results—and as such might rightly be interpreted as a first indication of the upcoming “end game.”<sup>63</sup>

As superpower relations worsened, the West German government attached “increasing importance” to research and analysis on the Warsaw Pact states and the GDR in particular. The MfS warned its superiors that the expertise of these institutions would only add to Bonn’s “long term strategy of differentiated political-ideological interference within the socialist states.” Mielke’s analysts painted a sinister picture of the network between research institutions, politics, and intelligence services in the FRG. They drew attention to the work of Heinz Timmermann—a former official in Willy Brandt’s Chancellor’s Office and a close confidant of Horst Ehmke (the former head of this office)—who was now advising the West German government as an expert at the Federal Institute for Eastern Studies (BIOst).<sup>64</sup> Timmermann and his colleagues had not only enter-

<sup>61</sup> For details, see Domnitz, “Der Traum von Helsinki”; Bickhardt, “Entspannungspolitik von unten”; Jarausch, “Der andere Blick.”

<sup>62</sup> Europäisches Netzwerk für Ost-West-Dialog, “Das Helsinki Abkommen,” 47ff.

<sup>63</sup> Kowalczyk, *Endspiel*.

<sup>64</sup> Horst Ehmke wrote the introduction to Heinz Timmermann, *Eurokommunismus*. Timmermann was also the author of a substantial number of semiofficial memoranda on Eurocommunism in the West and “reform communism” in the East. See the BIOst reports No. 1/79, 13/79, 31/80, 39/82, 18/85, 35/86, Cologne 1979–1986.

tained close contacts with Eurocommunists in France, Italy, and elsewhere in Europe but were now also in touch with the opposition movement in Poland. Furthermore, the experts from the West and the dissidents from the East legitimized these contacts—as angry Stasi officials noted—by referring to the CSCE agreements. Seen from East Berlin, all of this served only one objective: “spreading dissatisfaction and doubt” within communist societies, especially in Poland and East Germany. At the basis of this explanation for the renewed West European interests in the East was once again the assumption that all evil could only come from outside. It was clearly unthinkable that a socialist reality could cause such frustration and doubt among its own citizens. According to the mental framing of the SED leadership and their official aides, this meant by implication that Western influence on the GDR could be measured simply by looking at the increase of dissatisfaction among East German citizens.

At the same time that “diversion” (subversion) from the West seemed to be increasing, the GDR’s allies and above all its protector, the USSR, refused to support stricter countermeasures within the Warsaw Pact. While Honecker, Mielke, and the East German Minister of Defense Heinz Hoffmann worked toward a Warsaw Pact invasion in Poland in order to shield their own country from the “Polish bacillus”<sup>65</sup> of Solidarność (Solidarity), the Politburo in Moscow under Brezhnev’s personal leadership prevented these aspirations from becoming reality not least for reasons connected to their international reputation and the economic and political costs involved.<sup>66</sup> East Berlin was left to its own devices and much of this looked like rather hapless activism. A telling example is the withdrawal of the few East German exchange students from Poland, coordinated by the State Security.<sup>67</sup> Because all of these students had been subjected to an intensive ideological indoctrination before, their urgent repatriation demonstrated how small confidence was both in the proficiency of one’s own efforts of indoctrination and in the attraction of the official ideology—even among the official guardians of faith.

It is worth noting that it was not so much the small dissident groups within the GDR (who continued to be criminalized by the authorities) but

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<sup>65</sup> Cited in Borodziej und Kochanowski, “Die DDR-Staatssicherheit,” 28.

<sup>66</sup> On East Berlin and the Polish crisis, see Jarzabek, “Konsequenzen der polnischen Krise”; Tantzsch, “Was in Polen geschieht”; Kubina und Wilke, *Hart und kompromißlos durchgreifen*.

<sup>67</sup> See BStU: HA XX-173 for material on the indoctrination and repatriation of forty-one students from Lodz in February 1981.

the vast majority of East Germans who began to benefit from more information and contacts and more opportunities for travel and family reunions. Despite the predictions and warnings from the Stasi, from the perspective of the political decision-makers in East Berlin and other Warsaw Pact capitals all of these had to be counted as inadvertent consequences of an increasingly protracted situation with very few political, military, and economic options. It seems apt to note that the cross-block pursuit of security interests in Continental Europe also helped to maintain and even to partially improve the “Basket III” obligations for and within the socialist societies.

### **A Decisive Link: Civil Rights and Military Détente**

Similarly, the ongoing CDE negotiations in Stockholm and the wider defense issues discussed and agreed at the CSCE initiated—at least in Mielke’s perception—a dangerous “Madrid effect” among East German soldiers and border troops. The relaxation of tensions, which went hand-in-hand with the progress in international negotiations, also meant a more relaxed attitude among military personnel—who, according to Stasi surveys, now saw the likelihood of any military aggression by the capitalist West as rather small. This went against communist doctrine and against all efforts of indoctrination during the previous decades. The same insights that were judged as far-sightedness at the highest political levels were treated as extremely dangerous ideological aberrations when spotted among the rank and file.

It was at the beginning of détente in the early 1970s when Mielke directed the attention of his officers toward the “difficult task to continue to prosecute the negative political-ideological consequences stemming from the manifold and increasingly complex possibilities for contact [with the West].” He had explained that these effects might only come to fruit “after a long time.”<sup>68</sup> Now, after Madrid, Mielke once again saw Western-style PID at work. His reaction to the “faults and weaknesses”<sup>69</sup> within the border regime followed a long established rationale: more power and control

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<sup>68</sup> BStU: BdL 005700, speech delivered by Mielke at the central service conference of the MfS, November 16, 1972.

<sup>69</sup> BStU: BdL 005506, “Central directives for Main Department VII for submitting periodical reports [on the border regime],” sent by Deputy Minister for State Security Lieutenant-General Neiber to all heads of departments, October 30, 1982.

for the only true "shield and sword" of the Party—the MfS—over and within all institutions relevant for upholding the physical delimitation from West Germany.

After Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in March 1985, the Mielke style of dealing with the adverse domestic effects of the CSCE became increasingly outmoded. When in early 1986 the CSCE expert forum on human rights began its work in Bern,<sup>70</sup> the East German Ministry for State Security demanded an "offensive approach" not only of the GDR's own delegation but by all Warsaw Pact members.<sup>71</sup> The material drawn up to this effect for the Ministry's "central group for analysis and information" came close to satire. The authors tried really hard to construct cases for the "abuse" of CSCE-rules and "interference" within the GDR by the West.<sup>72</sup> But the examples cited proved above all the domestic problems of the SED regime and its own violations of the "spirit" of Helsinki deriving from those difficulties: uncensored reporting by foreign correspondents was turned into an "inspiration" of opposition and dissidence within the GDR; granting access to Western print media in the library of the U.S. embassy was judged as a criminal act because this involved "nonlicensed print products"; and the activities of the head of the Centre Culturel Français, Dominique Paillarse, to "improve its attractiveness and impact" were denounced as improper interference. Yet all of these so-called violations had actually been agreed on by East Berlin in signed CSCE documents. After all, what was free reporting for if not for the information of the individual reader? What was the purpose of an open library, if not for reading? What was the reason for an international cultural institute, if it could not be visited and could not project the image of its proprietor?

The main problem faced by the state and party leadership in East Berlin, by its controllers in the MfS and its negotiators in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was obviously not so much the CSCE rules themselves—as these proved almost impossible to change (particularly without support from Moscow)—but the increasing and fast growing challenges of the Party's monopoly on information and interpretation.

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<sup>70</sup> The "CSCE Experts Meeting on Human Contacts" was held from 02.04 until 26.05.1986 in Bern.

<sup>71</sup> BStU: HA II-23851. "Material in support of an offensive approach by the GDR delegation during the expert meeting on human contacts in Bern," without date, but with cover page from 17.02.1986.

<sup>72</sup> BStU: HA II-23851. "Support for drawing up material in support of an offensive approach by the GDR delegation [...]" Berlin, 17.02.1986, compiled for ZAIG by Main Department II (counter-intelligence).

## **Superpower Deals with Fatal Implications for the GDR**

In May 1986, only four months into the negotiations in Bern, MfS analysts drew their superiors' attention to the fact that Soviet leadership appeared prepared to compromise on human rights in order to make headway with the West and especially the Americans in the military and economic field. U.S. officials had indeed declared in internal consultations with other delegations from NATO states that they would only agree to progress in the field of military security in Europe if the Warsaw Pact states gave way on civil rights issues and human contacts.<sup>73</sup> Soviet delegates rather quickly gave into these demands and forced the entire Warsaw Pact to follow the line negotiated between them and the Americans. The initial compromise in Bern featured improved possibilities for communication and family contacts without an age-limit, contacts between foreigners and citizens, and family reunions particularly if minors were involved. Furthermore, the "human dimension" of the CSCE recommendations were to be turned into obligations, and the application within each state to be monitored by the CSCE.

With their hands tight by a rigid mandate for the negotiations in Bern, East German diplomats witnessed almost helplessly the advent of a new dynamic in East-West relations with foreseeably severe consequences for GDR society. Help arrived from an unexpected source; following instructions from Washington, the U.S. delegates rejected the concluding document apparently on the grounds of negotiating tactics (the negotiations between the superpowers on their intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe and the CDE negotiations in Stockholm were still in their final phase). The analysts in East Berlin conceded: "We have only gained a breather because of U.S. action." They were no longer under any illusions about what the multilateral future had in store: "The pressure on the socialist states and the GDR in these questions will further increase."<sup>74</sup>

East Berlin's fears of having to pay the bill for a security deal between Moscow and Washington came to a head during the deputy foreign ministers' meeting of the Warsaw Pact states in September 1986. Vadim Logi-

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<sup>73</sup> BStU: HVA 57, "Western analyses on the possible results of the experts meeting on human contacts in Bern," Information survey on foreign policy No. 19/86, May 19, 1986.

<sup>74</sup> BStU: ZKG 12693, analysis on the situation after the experts' meeting in Bern and before the Vienna CSCE follow-up conference, June 5, 1986.

nov, the head of the Soviet delegation, declared that a "balanced progress" within the CSCE would "practically mean a linkage between advances in military détente and compromises in human questions."<sup>75</sup> The Soviets informed their surprised comrades from the Warsaw Pact that Moscow was "working on a new approach" to civil rights questions. The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs had established a "department for humanitarian and cultural relations" and a special group within the consular department was monitoring the transfer into practice of new legal directives on family reunions and family travel. All this would be published at the start of the CSCE in Vienna.<sup>76</sup> Not only the leadership in East Berlin but also other "brotherly states" took issue with this and in turn demanded Moscow "intensify the coordination on these questions and to wage the tactic of this approach carefully and timely." Such a united opposition against policy directives from Moscow had rarely, if ever, been noted before in any of the Warsaw Pact committee meetings.

When Gorbachev and Egor Ligachev, the powerful secretary of the CPSU Central Committee confirmed this link between security policies and human rights<sup>77</sup> and when SED officials signed a memorandum on "mutual security" between East and West<sup>78</sup> that had been drafted together with West German SPD members, Mielke must certainly have felt surrounded by enemies within his own camp. Soon enough he turned against the SPD-SED paper, which he and his cronies in the MfS must have perceived as more proof of PID in action.

It was October 1987 when news reached East Berlin that Gorbachev was intending to submit to Western human rights demands at the CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna, as a quid pro quo deal for American acquiescence to a zero solution on intermediate nuclear forces (the INF treaty) plus their participation in a disarmament conference on conventional

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<sup>75</sup> BStU: ZKG 12693, "Report on the work meeting of the deputy foreign ministers of the Warsaw Treaty states on 2nd September 1986 in Warsaw in preparation of the CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna," Berlin, by Herbert Krolkowski, September 3, 1986.

<sup>76</sup> For the Stasi's fight against family reunions (involving emigration from the GDR) and the problems resulting from the CSCE conference in Vienna, see Eisenfeld, *Die Zentrale Koordinierungsgruppe*; and Crome and Franzke, "Die SED-Führung."

<sup>77</sup> For the internal speeches by Gorbachev and Ligachev, see BStU: HA IX-2379, MfS report, October 1, 1986.

<sup>78</sup> Grundwertekommission der SPD und Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED, "Der Streit der Ideologien und die gemeinsame Sicherheit"; East German perspectives are provided by Reißig, *Dialog durch die Mauer*; and Mertens, *Rote Denkfabrik?*, 215ff.

forces in Europe.<sup>79</sup> For this Gorbachev was prepared to allow a clause on “free movement” (the entry and exit of persons to/from one country) to be inserted into the concluding document; to agree to bilateral mechanisms of control in civil rights questions and to written explanations in case of refused applications for travel; to acknowledge independent Helsinki watch-groups; and to deal with “unsolved cases” within six months. East Germany’s diplomats protested against this unilateral approach by Moscow: They demanded that the Soviet delegation should properly “take care of GDR interests.” In order to maintain a common front of Warsaw Pact states in Vienna (on which Soviet guarantees for the GDR effectively hinged), the Party and state leadership in East Berlin finally gave way and agreed to the draft of the concluding document in Vienna. The only exception were “Helsinki watch groups,” which according to internal Stasi documents had “to be rejected as before,” even if this went against CSCE regulations. Instead, East Berlin intended to sell its own state “Committee for European Security and Cooperation” as a Helsinki watch body.<sup>80</sup>

The effects for the border regime of the GDR (the “wall”) and the domestic room to maneuver via MfS control mechanisms were enormous. MfS analysts proclaimed a completely “new situation”: reverting to “armed intervention”—meaning the shooting of East Germans trying to escape to the West through, under or over the wall—was now out of the question.<sup>81</sup> Instead, only “preventive measures” could be applied.<sup>82</sup> The work of East German and Polish border troops in the “hinterland” was however characterized by “insufficient vigilance” and “unfavorable conditions of distance and time.”<sup>83</sup>

Even legal immigrants were becoming increasingly difficult to control: the documents accepted in Vienna practically granted free working conditions to foreign journalists within the GDR.<sup>84</sup> If applied, the Vienna

<sup>79</sup> BStU: ZKG 16788, Draft memorandum for the SED Politburo, “Directive for the future approach of the GDR delegation during the drafting phase on civil rights and human questions at the CSCE,” n.d.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., appendixes 2 and 3 to the draft memorandum for the SED Politburo.

<sup>81</sup> BStU: ZAIG 16338, speech delivered by Neiber in May 1988 on the “reliable protection of the state border.”

<sup>82</sup> BStU: ZKG 16338, “Information about attacks on the state border of the GDR,” June 1988.

<sup>83</sup> BStU: ZAIG 16338, speech delivered by Neiber.

<sup>84</sup> BStU: ZAIG 15506, “Support work” by the “central group for analysis and information” (ZAIG) for the draft of a SED Politburo decision on the legal consequences of the CSCE agreements in Vienna, March 1989.



document meant the end of formal admissions for journalistic work; free access to sources of information (including dissident groups); noncontrolled forwarding of information by journalists, and no more personal "advisers" for each journalist. From an MfS-perspective, these "changed conditions" seemed to necessitate even "higher security precautions" than before.

When the CSCE in Vienna ended in January 1989, the unified position of the Warsaw Pact states on questions concerning civil rights and human contacts had evaporated; it had simply been "lost" in the process, as Stasi analysts remarked.<sup>85</sup> All that was left for the MfS to do was to advise the SED Politburo to play a waiting game and to draw out any adaptations to the new international rules until September 1989 and thus prevent any legalization of Helsinki groups, at least temporarily.<sup>86</sup> This was possible because "the citizen [obtained] a legal right" on the regulations codified in the Vienna document "only after their transfer into domestic law."<sup>87</sup> In early 1989 this still appeared to leave enough time to change East German legislation in order to outlaw Helsinki watch groups as "acting outside the existing legal order and against the state."<sup>88</sup>

But the new Soviet leadership deserted the GDR hard-liners not only ideologically but also in the military and security field—a quintessential condition for the continuation of SED rule in East Germany. During the conference series on conventional forces in Europe (CFE), which started in January 1989, the Soviet delegates negotiated large-scale troop withdrawals from Central Europe—supported by some of their allies, while the attitude taken by East Berlin's diplomats remained for obvious reasons, rather lackluster. Experts in the GDR—after all still a front state in the conflict between East and West—continued to fear NATO capabilities "for a surprise attack or large-scale offensive operations."<sup>89</sup> Soviet troop

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<sup>85</sup> BStU: HA IX-19667, "Note on consequences and contents-related questions regarding the course and results of the 3rd CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna," no date (the document can be dated January 1989 based on contents and allocation of the file).

<sup>86</sup> BStU: HVA 975, letter from the head of the ZAIG, Lieutenant-General Werner Irmeler, to other departmental heads, March 8, 1989.

<sup>87</sup> Legal expertise included in the "Note on consequences on contents-related questions."

<sup>88</sup> Draft for a decision by the SED Politburo in the annex to Irmeler's letter of March 8, 1989.

<sup>89</sup> BStU: ZAIG 6760, Information No. 54/III of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs about "Warsaw Pact and NATO positions at the start of the Vienna negotiations," March 9, 1989; see also the memorandum "Negotiations on conventional forces in Europe between 23 Warsaw Pact and NATO member states," in *ibid.*, February 27, 1989.

withdrawals did nothing to ease these fears. Time and again during the CFE negotiations East German officials were confronted with the necessity to define and pursue their own security interests—rather than those of the Eastern bloc or the Soviet Union. American diplomacy apparently tried to capitalize on this situation by offering a “stable security system in Central Europe including two German states” if “offensive Soviet forces were no longer deployed on GDR territory.”<sup>90</sup> According to Stasi documents, the Americans argued that they were willing to push this through even against the position of the West Germans.

Shortly before the start of the CFE negotiations, Gorbachev proclaimed in December 1988 that the people of each nation had the right to choose their own societal system, even the exit of individual states from their respective blocks became feasible.<sup>91</sup> In the spring of 1989 the Bush administration also judged that the end of the “Cold War” had approached. Of course, the Americans were interested in an end to communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe, but from Washington’s perspective the new situation also demanded the prevention of a military crisis in Europe so as not to trigger destabilization within individual societies in the East.<sup>92</sup> Against this background, it is hardly surprising that Soviet and American delegates would soon sit down together in Vienna to discuss cautiously—but never frankly—the options following a dissolution of communist rule in East Germany.<sup>93</sup>

## Conclusion

The late 1970s and early 1980s featured a breakdown in relations between the superpowers—in parallel with a continuation and even intensification of East-West cooperation on a wide variety of issues within Europe. Much

<sup>90</sup> BStU: HVA 812/1, Information No. 208/89, Berlin, “on the anticipation of American divergence-activities with regard to the GDR,” from Mielke to Honecker, read and signed by the latter on the same day, May 4, 1989.

<sup>91</sup> BStU: HVA 812/1, Information No. 219/89, Berlin, 06.05.1989, “on the postulate of a ‘freedom of choice’ within the new thinking in the USSR as perceived by government circles in the FRG,” sent from Mielke to Honecker. For Gorbachev’s speech before the UN General Assembly on December 7, 1988, see <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/5292-1>.

<sup>92</sup> BStU: HVA 812/1, “Analysis of current aspects of the policy of the Bush-administration towards the USSR,” Berlin, May 10, 1989.

<sup>93</sup> Author’s conversation with a senior member of the U.S. delegation to the CFE negotiations in 2009 and 2010.

of the latter helped to put Soviet-American relations back on track. But, perhaps more important, the early 1980s saw the initiation of key developments in the economic, military, media, and human rights that became momentous factors in the "end game" between 1987 and 1989. Within this dynamically changing international frame, the Stasi's task of upholding the Party's unchallenged rule in East Germany became increasingly complicated and then increasingly obsolete, finally turning itself into a liability for the regime's own legitimacy. Even the more indirect and less visible methods of repression developed and deployed by the Stasi in the 1970s and 1980s were found in breach with more and more international agreements signed by East German representatives in the wake of the CSCE process. Stasi experts had warned of this development as far back as the early 1970s. However, increasing economic difficulties and the determination of the Gorbachev administration to pursue Soviet security interests within the CSCE in exchange for greater give in the "human dimension" committed the Party and state leadership of the GDR to an irreversible multilateral process that eventually created the framing for the demise of their state.



# New Security Concepts and Transnational Party Networks, 1976–1983

## The Socialist International, Scandilux, and the Overcoming of the Crisis of Détente

*Rasmus Mariager*

In his memoirs, former West German Chancellor and promoter of Ostpolitik Willy Brandt makes a number of observations concerning his role as president of the Socialist International (SI) from 1976 to 1992. In a section titled “Power and Myth,” Brandt maintains that the SI’s reputation was always stronger than its influence, and that under his presidency the SI was not a super party, let alone a superpower. However, he also suggests that the value of discussions within the SI cannot be overstated: “In this way. . . many thoughts have been promoted, much decisive support has been agreed upon, and many new friendships have been founded.”<sup>1</sup> Brandt’s observations are important, as they provide us with a new perspective and a deeper insight into the dynamics and driving forces behind changes within the Western bloc in the late 1970s and early 1980s: dynamics and driving forces that focus more on the pivotal role of ideas and values than on the political course of events and decision-making.<sup>2</sup>

Following the signing of the Helsinki Final Act on August 1, 1975, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated and détente faced a crisis. Students of Cold War history discuss the depth of the crisis: did détente die or did it survive? Despite disagreements, most scholars do agree that détente was challenged from the mid-1970s.<sup>3</sup> But it was not only détente and the bilateral U.S.-Soviet relationship that had suffered; relations between the United States and its trans-Atlantic allies

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<sup>1</sup> Brandt, *Erinnerungen*, 437–38.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to perspectives on political history presented in Béland and Cox, *Ideas and Politics*, as well as in Frevert and Haupt, *Neue Politikgeschichte*. The present analysis lies within the scope of transnational history.

<sup>3</sup> See Nuti, ed., *The Crisis of Détente in Europe*; Villaume and Westad, eds., *Perforating the Iron Curtain*.

had also worsened. This was especially true with regard to the relatively large number of West European countries in which Social Democratic parties traditionally held a strong position, as was the case in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.<sup>4</sup> However, relations between the United States and other West European countries—for example, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium—were also strained in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Indeed, historian Geir Lundestad has argued that Great Britain was the only West European country that seemed to fully share the sharpened American Cold War policies from the late 1970s on and the conservative economic policies known as “Reaganomics.”<sup>5</sup> How do we account for the strained relationship between the United States and a number of Northern European countries in the late 1970s and early 1980s?

Historians have offered differing explanations for the widening schism that occurred between the United States and Western Europe. Especially European historians have focused on the fact that the United States distanced itself from the policy of détente shortly after signing the Helsinki Final Act in order to conduct a policy of “getting tough with the Russians.” From 1981 this policy was followed by President Reagan who announced his ambition to kill détente and to defeat the “Evil Empire” from a position of strength.<sup>6</sup> With reference to the United States’ sanctions against the Soviet Union and Poland following Jaruzelski’s introduction of martial law in Poland in 1981, historian John W. Young states that “West European governments disliked being faced with a U.S. *fait accompli*.”<sup>7</sup> In this way it has been argued that West European countries in general disapproved of the developments of the United States’ Cold War policies from 1975–76 on, considering them to be both willful and unilateral.

Other historians have argued that the West European countries had their share of responsibility for this schism. First, most West European governments wanted to continue the policy of détente despite what numerous American observers considered to be a fact, namely that détente had failed as it destabilized the priorities of the superpowers and thus the relationship between East and West.<sup>8</sup> Second, a number of European his-

<sup>4</sup> Riste, “NATO’s Northern Frontline”; Bjereld, Johansson, and Molin, *Sveriges säkerhet*, 244–314; Hanhimäki, “Security and Identity.”

<sup>5</sup> Lundestad, *The United States*, esp. Ch. 7, “From Bad to Worse. The United States and Western Europe, 1977–1984,” 201–225. On “Reaganism,” see Crockatt, *The Fifty Years War*, 305ff.

<sup>6</sup> Lundestad, *The United States*, 201; Gaddis, “Grand Strategies,” 19.

<sup>7</sup> Young, “Western Europe,” 293.

<sup>8</sup> Gaddis, “Grand Strategies.”

torians have emphasized that almost all West European countries experienced rifts over national security policies in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In *The Last Decade of the Cold War*, historians Frédéric Bozo, Leopoldo Nuti, and Olav Riste analyse the national security debates of, and Cold War-related questions in France, Italy, Denmark, and Norway. They also show that politicians and populations were divided over Reagan, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and NATO's arms build-up as well as over how to deal with the Soviet Union under Gorbachev from 1985 on. In this process Social Democratic parties played a key role. Following the establishment of the 1949 Atlantic Pact (and of NATO in 1950), most European labor parties had been firm, constant and occasionally even eager supporters of the alliance. However, from the late 1970s an increasing number of parties became skeptical of NATO nuclear weapons policies and, from 1981, toward specific Cold War policies of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in particular.<sup>9</sup> In this way Northern European Social Democratic parties seem to have adjusted, almost *en bloc*, their security policies following the Helsinki conference of 1975.

This chapter argues that the largely shared Northern European Social Democratic reaction against the intensified East-West confrontation, including the hard-line policies of the United States in the late 1970s and in the 1980s, should be seen as an attempt to continue the Ostpolitik promoted by Brandt. To a large extent the brainchild of Brandt's political adviser Egon Bahr in the 1960s and early 1970s, Ostpolitik should be defined as a policy toward the Eastern bloc with a double strategy: on the one hand a recognition of territorial status quo, and on the other hand the establishment of a process aimed at changing the status quo; hence the slogan *Wandel durch Annäherung* (Change through rapprochement).<sup>10</sup> In addition, following Helsinki 1975 prominent Social Democrats such as Willy Brandt, Egon Bahr, and Olof Palme utilized transnational Social Democratic networks—the Socialist International (from 1976) and Scandilux (from 1981)—to promote shared perspectives on how to curb or end the nuclear arms race and how to overcome the East-West divide.

The critical attitude of the Northern European Social Democratic parties toward aspects of the national security policies of the United States dating from 1975–76 on should not overshadow the fact that the very

<sup>9</sup> Bozo, "Before the Wall"; Nuti, "Italy and the Battle"; Riste, "NATO's Northern Frontline," all in Njølstad, *The Last Decade*. See also Njølstad, "Introduction."

<sup>10</sup> This understanding of *Ostpolitik* is based on Niedhart, "Revisionistische Elemente," and Bange, "An Intricate Web."

same parties continued to be as ideologically anticommunist as they had been since the 1930s and throughout the entire early Cold War period.<sup>11</sup> There was at least one significant difference between the Cold War policies of the Social Democratic parties in the early Cold War period and the late Cold War period. In the early period, their policies were pursued primarily on the assumption that the conflict between East and West was political and ideological between two societal systems that considered each other as their diametrical opposites: a systemic conflict. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, prominent Social Democratic leaders and many of their voters feared that the introduction of new types of tactical nuclear weapons on the European continent might provoke a Third World War. This was one of the key reasons why a number of Social Democratic parties at this time decided to tone down their anticommunist rhetoric, and instead to focus on revitalizing democratic socialist policies, highlighting the ideological distinctions between democratic socialism and communism also in order to save and further promote détente. This included an appeal to values rather than an attack on systems. Thus, the policies of North European labor parties with regard to European security in the late 1970s and early 1980s are best understood as a continuation of the West German Ostpolitik.<sup>12</sup>

### **“The Need for More Cooperation”**

In June 1976 the Dutch Labour Party, Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA) invited politicians from all European Social Democratic parties to a “Round Table Conference of Peace” scheduled to take place in Amsterdam in early November. The Conference initiative was based on two considerations. The

<sup>11</sup> On Social Democratic anticommunist activities in the Nordic countries from the 1930s to the 1950s, see Bergh and Eriksen, *Den hemmelige krigen*; Mariager and Petersen, “Socialdemokratiet og forholdet til DKP”; Schmidt, *Antikommunism och communism*.

<sup>12</sup> For earlier scholarship supporting this interpretation, see Nikolaj Petersen’s surveys on Scandilux published in 1984 and 1985. Petersen, “The Scandilux Experiment”; idem, “Scandilux og Danmark”; idem, “Scandilux-samarbejdet og vesteuropæisk.” See also the white book issued by Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier (DIIS). *Danmark under Den Kolde Krig: Den sikkerhedspolitiske situation, 1945–1991*, vols. 1–4, coordinated by Svend Aage Christensen. The white book was written by some ten researchers, including this author. This chapter is also based on the author’s original research in the archives of the labour movements in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark as well as on Egon Bahr’s Papers in the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn, Germany.



first was that existing coordination and discussions between European labor parties were relatively weak, despite common ideological foundations and perspectives. The PvdA leadership found this situation unproductive. Secondly, there was a perception that the hard-won East-West détente process was facing a crisis. The PvdA stated:

it is more than a year ago since the signing of the Final Act of Helsinki and less than a year before the so-called follow up conference in Belgrade. At the same time the negotiations on the limitation of strategic nuclear arms continue without success and we have to accept the fact that the talks in Vienna on the bringing about of a balance of conventional military power have been equally unsuccessful.

It must be made clear that both the discussions in Vienna and also the significance of the implementations of the Final Act of Helsinki will directly influence the security situation in Europe to a considerable extent. Indeed, these are talks in which European governments have far-reaching influence. Thus it is necessary for the democratic-socialists to take stock themselves of the situation as regards peace and security.<sup>13</sup>

The Dutch Labour Party thus intended to initiate a process that might promote the continuation of détente and lead to increased Social Democratic influence upon future East-West relations. In the introductory paper the Dutch party even posed the following question: “Is it imperative and/or possible for democratic-socialist parties to produce their own philosophy for a policy of détente and to indicate the various priorities within such a policy?”<sup>14</sup> To answer this and other questions, the organizers suggested establishing three thematic working groups entrusted with the task of: 1. sounding out separate opinions; 2. analyzing existing problems; and 3. promoting possibilities for common thinking and working.<sup>15</sup>

The PvdA attempted to give the conference an air of glamour, with participants being received in the Dutch Prime Minister Joop den Uyl’s official residence in the Hague. All delegates were assured that their discussion papers, speeches and conclusions would subsequently be published.<sup>16</sup> According to the invitation, the delegates—party leaders, high-ranking party officials, and Social Democratic security experts—were meant to use the

<sup>13</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/66, *Round Table Conference on Peace and Security*, Partij van de Arbeid, RAI-Congress centre, November 5–6, 1976. Amsterdam (programme, list of participants, introduction etc.): Introduction, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/66, “Letter from Partij van de Arbeid to the Swedish Social Democratic Party,” June 2, 1976; see also SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/66, “Letter from Partij van de Arbeid to all parties invited to the ‘Round Table Conference on Peace and Security,’” September 8, 1976.

conference to institute a process that would advance Social Democratic contributions “to the process of détente, the assurance of security and the curbing of the arms race.”<sup>17</sup> The invitation to attend the Conference was well received. Among the participants were more than fifty representatives from fifteen European labor parties. In addition, a number of Social Democrats from non-European countries participated as observers. Prominent politicians present at the Conference included Willy Brandt (Chairman of the German Social Democratic Party, former West German Chancellor and later president of the SI), Mário Soares (Portuguese Prime Minister), Willy Claes (Chairman of the Belgian Socialist Party and later NATO General Secretary), Fred Mulley (British Defense Minister), Felipe Gonzáles (General Secretary of the Spanish Socialist Worker’s Party and Spanish Prime Minister from 1982), Reiulf Steen (Chairman of the Norwegian Labour Party) and Poul Nielson (key parliamentarian in the Danish Social Democratic Party in the early 1980s, and later EU Commissioner).<sup>18</sup>

Discussions in all three working groups focused on the future security situation in Europe. In a debate in the group named “The Need for More Cooperation,” the PvdA presented an analysis stating that cooperation between European democratic socialist parties was important for three reasons. First, as a consequence of modern technology—that is developments in the arms race—security policy would only hold real significance if it were adopted by the European continent as a whole. Second, cooperation and solidarity among European socialist parties was necessary to counter the predominant influence of the United States over security decisions in Western Europe. In discreet but unmistakable wording it was stated that there “probably [would] be an inevitable development in the future towards increasing attunement [*sic*] of foreign policy amongst the member states of the European Community.” Third, Social Democratic cooperation was imperative since European nonmembers of the European Community and NATO were compelled to adjust their external policies to the policies of the EEC. On the basis of these three assumptions the PvdA suggested that the European labor parties “seek forms of negotiation within the framework of the Socialist International and, if possible, in conjunction with the activities of the Federation of Socialist Parties in the European Community.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/66, *Round Table Conference on Peace and Security*; see also SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/66.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 9: Thematic Group 3: The Need for More Cooperation.

Minutes of the meeting confirm that all of the delegates stressed the need for more “coordination of policies” regarding foreign and defense policies as well as economic and monetary policies. Furthermore, participants agreed on the need for a “thorough ideological exchange of views and coordination before coordinating other policies.” Finally, it was agreed that the future coordination should take place within the SI. It was well-known that in a matter of weeks (November 1976) the SI would elect a new president and a new bureau. This decision was also a tacit acknowledgment of the desire to elect Brandt and all that entailed. It is public knowledge that the SI (established in 1951) was an association of parties that worked to promote democratic socialism around the world. According to the “New Statutes of the Socialist International” from 1976, the purpose of the SI was to “strengthen relations between the affiliated parties and to coordinate their political attitudes by consent.” To this end, “the Socialist International will seek to extend the relations between the Socialist International and other Socialist oriented parties not in membership which desire cooperation.”<sup>20</sup> As to the important question of possible contacts between Social Democrats and Communists, there was a “general agreement” in the working group on the “usefulness of contacts,” although this topic gave rise to discussions and not all delegates supported this position. According to the minutes, the majority of the delegates found it important to demonstrate that Social Democrats did not fear the ideological competition between communism and democratic socialism. On the contrary, it was emphasized that Social Democratic parties should intensify their “involvement in the ideological debate and struggle” as democratic socialism should “represent an inspiring alternative” to communism. Hence, the SI was to be used to “vitalize and modernize the ideological discussion.”<sup>21</sup>

By all accounts the roundtable conference was a great success and activities within the Social Democratic world movement in the following years indicate that the coordination of policies was just what the labor parties needed.

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<sup>20</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/69, “New Statutes of the Socialist International: Final Draft as approved by the Bureau,” adopted by the Socialist International, November 1976.

<sup>21</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/66, *Round Table Conference on Peace and Security*, Thematic Group 3: The Need for More Cooperation.

## Willy Brandt, the SI, and the Revitalizing of Democratic Socialism

In 1974, Willy Brandt resigned as West Germany's Chancellor following the Günter Guillaume affair.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Brandt remained an international Social Democratic superstar, and he was invited to give the inaugural speech to the roundtable conference in Amsterdam.<sup>23</sup> Brandt's presence in Amsterdam was no coincidence. Presumably, the conference was not only an attempt to coordinate and promote Social Democratic détente policy but also a platform for the planning of the SI's 13th Congress, scheduled to take place in Geneva in late November 1976—less than three weeks after the conference in Amsterdam. Since the beginning of 1976, Brandt had been encouraged by his close friend, Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, to run for the SI presidency. At first Brandt had allegedly been hesitant, but after having obtained support for organizational changes and better economic foundations, he decided to accept the invitation.<sup>24</sup> More interestingly, two days after the Amsterdam conference, Brandt sent the draft of a speech to Bernt Carlsson. The speech was both an acceptance speech and a policy statement. At the time of receiving Brandt's letter, Bernt Carlsson was international secretary in the Swedish Social Democratic Party and one of former, and later, Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme's political sparring partners. At the 13th Congress of the SI in Geneva, Carlsson was elected general secretary of the SI whereupon he left his position with the Swedish party.<sup>25</sup> The result of the 13th SI Congress was, in other words, that two leading politicians from Northern Europe seized power in the SI: an alliance between one of the fathers of Ostpolitik and one of Olof Palme's political advisers. According to Peter Merseburger's biography of Brandt, this alliance had been encouraged and supported not only by Kreisky, but also by Palme, Mitterrand, Craxi,

<sup>22</sup> In 1974 it was disclosed that Günter Guillaume, a close aide to Willy Brandt, was an East German spy working for the Stasi. On the Guillaume affair and the resignation of Brandt, see Merseburger, *Willy Brandt*, 657–738.

<sup>23</sup> In his talk, Brandt presented twelve items of importance to the security of a future Europe. See SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/66, "Mitteilung für die Presse. Der SPD-Vorsitzende Willy Brandt legt auf der Konferenz über Frieden und Sicherheit der niederländischen Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA) am 5. und 6. November 1976 in Amsterdam das folgende Zölf-punkte-Papir unter dem Titel 'Bemerkungen zur Sicherheitspolitik in Europa.'"

<sup>24</sup> Merseburger, *Willy Brandt*, 751; see also Brandt, Kreisky and Palme, *Briefe und Gespräche*.

<sup>25</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/67, letter from Willy Brandt, Vorsitzender der SPD, to Bernt Carlsson, November 8, 1976.

Soares, and González—most of the Social Democratic elite in Western Europe.<sup>26</sup>

The results of this alliance quickly became evident. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the SI had lived in the shadows without much political influence or public attention.<sup>27</sup> However, following the 13th Congress, the organization was renewed, and the SI's influence began to be seen in national security policies and debates in an increasing number of West European countries. Three noteworthy examples in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark illustrate this.

In 1977, the Norwegian Labour Party published a new working program concerning the years 1978–81: *Solidaritet, Arbeid, Miljø* (Solidarity, Work, Environment). According to the program, the Labour Party wanted to “strengthen the Socialist International as a forum for cooperation for democratic socialists and progressive political voices from all parts of the world.”<sup>28</sup> This was by no means an invocation. In the early 1980s, the Norwegian Labour Party together with its sister parties in Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and Finland repeatedly promoted suggestions presented by the SI.<sup>29</sup> In 1984 an internal working paper stressed that the party together with other Social Democratic parties should take “concrete arms reduction initiatives” and that “in this process the Scandilux-group of Socialist parties in smaller NATO countries can play an important role.”<sup>30</sup>

In 1980, the Swedish Social Democratic Party (then in opposition) published a booklet titled *Säkerhets- och försvarspolitiken* (The security and defense policy). The booklet stated explicitly that it was important for Swedish security policy to be in line with policies of the SI.<sup>31</sup> After Olof Palme regained power in 1982, the Swedish Social Democratic Party launched a so-called active foreign policy, which some critics saw as almost incompatible with Swedish neutrality.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Merseburger, *Willy Brandt*, 752.

<sup>27</sup> Christensen, *Nye mål i en ny verden*, 15–22.

<sup>28</sup> *Solidaritet, Arbeid, Miljø. Arbejdsprogram 1978–81* (1977), 40.

<sup>29</sup> NO/ARBAK DNA/SAGSARKIV 1972–1985 BOX 221. E.g., “Uttalelse fra Samarbeidsskomiteens møte,” May 15–16, 1981; “Uttalelse fra SAMAK-mødet,” Køge, February 15–16, 1983; “Samarbeidsskomiteen Mellom Landsorganisasjonene og de Sosialdemokratiske Partier I Norden (SAMAK),” møte January 16–17, 1985. Both in NO/ARBAK DNA/SAGSARKIV 1972–1985 BOX 222.

<sup>30</sup> NO/ARBARK DNA/SIDEORDNET SAGSARKIV, IU, BOX 10, chapter 5, “Europa-politik, Oppsummering og programpunkter,” June 31, 1984.

<sup>31</sup> SAP, *Säkerhets- och försvarspolitiken*, 9–11.

<sup>32</sup> E.g., Hanhimäki, *Scandinavia and the United States*, 160.

The third example is from 1981 when the SI held a presidium meeting in Bonn. During a radio interview from the meeting, the Danish presidium member, Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen, indicated a favorable attitude to the idea of declaring the Nordic region a nuclear weapons free zone. This was in stark contrast to the official position of the Danish Social Democratic Party's position since the 1950s—namely that such a zone would run counter to NATO's nuclear strategy, and thus only serve Soviet interests.<sup>33</sup> According to Willy Brandt's summary of the SI meeting, this issue had indeed been discussed, and it appears that the Danes, the Norwegians, and the Finns used the SI to promote the idea of the Nordic region as a nuclear weapons free zone. At this time, the summer of 1981, the question was not of direct concern to the SI, but as Brandt stated: "Once the wider context is clear this will become our concern again."<sup>34</sup>

#### **BOX 1: Transnational Social Democratic discussion forums**

**Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the European Community:** EEC level

**EUROSUD:** Southwest European level (France, Greece, Spain)

**SAMAK:** Scandinavian level (Norway, Sweden, Denmark)

**SCANDILUX:** Northwest European level within NATO (Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Belgium; Observers from West Germany, Great Britain, and France)

**Socialist International:** Global level

The growing influence of the SI was undoubtedly due to Willy Brandt's personality and his prestige among both party associates and political opponents. As pointed out by Jussi Hanhimäki, during the 1970s and 1980s Brandt was a symbol of the new European era. He had been a victim of Nazism in the 1930s and 1940s as well as mayor of Berlin at the time of the building of the Wall in 1961. As such, he had earned his anti-totalitarian and anticommunist credentials, and was consequently considered to be the right person to talk peace to the Soviets.<sup>35</sup> This view is further substantiated by Social Democratic sources. In 1982, after attending an SI Bureau meeting, an official of the Norwegian Labour Party wrote to his party chairman Gro Harlem Brundtland: "I had not attended SI's Bu-

<sup>33</sup> DIIS, *Danmark under den kolde krig*, vol. 3, 145.

<sup>34</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/81, "Willy Brandt's summary of the presidium meeting held in Bonn on 16th July 1981, 3."

<sup>35</sup> Hanhimäki, "Détente in Europe," 216.

reau Meetings since before the ‘Brandt era’ and the difference was enormous. In fact a bit scary. The International is constructed around Brandt and his prestige. Every time disagreements were too great, Brandt was asked to solve or explain them. This was possible because everybody, no matter the disagreements, had an enormous confidence in Willy Brandt and his way to deal with them.”<sup>36</sup>

Another reason for the SI’s growing influence may have been related to what might be characterized as a collective loss of governmental power of Social Democratic parties between the mid-1970s and early 1980s. Following the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, détente faced a crisis and a key Social Democratic Cold War project—Ostpolitik—was under pressure. In 1976, the Swedish Labour Party lost power. In 1977, the Dutch Labour Party lost power. In 1979, the Labour Party was defeated by the Conservative Party in Great Britain. And in Norway and Denmark, the democratic socialist governments had to leave office in 1981 and 1982, respectively. Also in 1982 the West German SPD had to leave government offices in Bonn. Within the same time frame, the Democratic Party lost U.S. Presidential elections in three consecutive terms to Republicans Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush.

The collective loss of power of center-left political forces symbolized a stronger undercurrent on the way globally. The 1950s and 1960s can in many ways be characterized as the “Social Democratic Era” in Western Europe. In this epoch the Scandinavian labor parties and a number of Northern European labor parties developed welfare states in addition to pushing for East-West détente within NATO.<sup>37</sup> When these parties went into opposition from the second half of the 1970s on, they also lost access to information that only governments in power controlled. It was a collective loss of power, information, and influence. Consequently, the international Social Democratic movement lost self-confidence, and needed a forum to discuss political projects and re-build its self-assurance. The SI fulfilled this need.

A third factor may also explain the growing influence of the SI: Brandt’s ambitions to influence the national security policies of the West European countries and of the United States. The question was, of course, how the SI would be able to obtain the maximum amount of influence? In

<sup>36</sup> NO/ARBARK DNA/SAGSARKIV, 1972–1985, BOX 243, “Rapport fra Byråmøtet i Socialistinternationelen, Basel, 3–4 november 1982.” From Leonard Larsen to Gro Harlem Brundtland et al.

<sup>37</sup> On social democratism and the establishment of welfare states, see the contributions in Kettunen and Petersen, *Beyond Welfare State Models*.

this context, Brandt was aware that he and the SI might gain more influence if the SI were considered a partner of the member parties—one whose objective was to inspire them, while leaving them free to formulate their own national strategies. In his first speech as SI president, Brandt emphasized that the SI was not a “control centre,” let alone an “international political party with a single-string doctrine” (*einheitlichen Doktrin*). Instead he stressed the ambition to coordinate, help and provide “moral support.” As such, Brandt wanted to promote “common perspectives” and “national strategies.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, coordination of policies, shared perspectives, and contacts with Moscow became more common than hitherto known. In 1979 and in 1984, Danish Social Democratic leaders went to Moscow to conduct talks with Soviet officials. These visits, especially the latter, have been criticized by some Danish historians maintaining that the Soviet Union considered the Social Democratic Party to be “allied in the struggle against the Danish liberal-conservative government and NATO.”<sup>39</sup> Yet Social Democratic Party delegation visits to Moscow seem to have been rather frequent during the late 1970s and 1980s. In 1980, the Swedish Labour Party headed by Olof Palme sent a party delegation to Moscow,<sup>40</sup> and in 1985 a West German party delegation, headed by Willy Brandt, visited Moscow.<sup>41</sup> These visits were in line with the decision made in Amsterdam in 1976: to further the ideological competition between communism and democratic socialism. Several labor parties also sent delegations to Washington to discuss arms control issues with the American administration, and the SI continually sent delegations to both Moscow and Washington.<sup>42</sup>

Because of Willy Brandt’s personality and charisma, the collective Social Democratic loss of power, and the positioning of the SI as a partner in

<sup>38</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/67, “Letter from Willy Brandt, Vorsitzender der SPD, to Bernt Carlsson,” November 8, 1976.

<sup>39</sup> Jensen, *Tryk og tilpasning*, 170–72. For an opposing view, see Schmidt, *PET’s overvågning*.

<sup>40</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAMAK 1213/E/1/4, “SAP:s delegationsbesök i Moskva 29/9–3/10 1980.”

<sup>41</sup> Budtz, *Her stod vi af*, 197–98.

<sup>42</sup> FES, EB 1/EBAA000597, “REMARKS by Leonid Brezhnev to Mr. Olof Palme,” June 12, 1981; FES, EB 1/EBAA000713, “Bericht über die Ergebnisse eines Besuch in Washington von 6. Bis 10. Januar 1980”; FES, EB 1/EBAA000783, “Socialist International Advisory Council on Disarmament and Arms Control (SIDAC). Reise Moskau, 20. bis 23.3–Washington 24. bis 26.3.85”; NO/ARBARK DNA/SAGSARKIV 1972–1985, BOX 221, “SAMAK—Helsingfors, 2–3 December 1979,” MEMORANDUM; Nielson, *En hel Nielson*.



furthering national security policies, the SI became a catalyst for a growing cohesion among the European labor parties. This resulted in greater cooperation, coordination, and exchange of information in the ongoing struggle with liberal/conservative parties over national security strategies and Cold War policies.<sup>43</sup>

In his 1976 policy statement Brandt emphasized that the SI would focus on three political issues: peace and disarmament; north-south problems; and human rights issues.<sup>44</sup> These questions were relevant not only to the industrialized world, but also—and especially—to populations in the Third World. According to Steen Christensen, former international secretary of the Danish Social Democratic Party, this was no coincidence, as Brandt's goal was to appeal to the developing world, which had been the subject of competition between communist and capitalist countries for decades. By reformulating democratic socialism and appealing to Third World countries, Brandt presented an alternative to American capitalism and Soviet communism, as well as promoted democratic socialism as a third way between the two. In this connection, Brandt and his associates developed a "common concept." This meant that solutions to challenges were to be found among the players who were traditionally considered opponents. In other words, it would be best that the industrialized world did not attempt to solve economic problems without cooperating with the developing world. Equally, peace would not be created by means of armaments but only through cooperation with the adversary. As such, global and durable solutions would best be found by avoiding clichéd images and stereotypes of the enemy.<sup>45</sup> During the late 1970s and 1980s this political concept was further developed by prominent members of the SI. Some of these SI members were in charge of four international working groups, two of which were so-called independent commissions. In 1980, Brandt published the *North-South* report.<sup>46</sup> In 1982 Olof Palme issued the report titled *Common Security*.<sup>47</sup> In 1985 the former Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley

<sup>43</sup> See Petersen, "The Scandilux Experiment."

<sup>44</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/67, "Letter from Willy Brandt, Vorsitzender der SPD, to Bernt Carlsson," November 8, 1976.

<sup>45</sup> Christensen, *Nye mål i en ny verden*, 27. See also Rother, "Between East and West."

<sup>46</sup> Independent Commission on International Development Issues, *North-South*. See Brandt, *Erinnerungen*, 375ff.

<sup>47</sup> Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, *Common Security*. See Brandt, *Erinnerungen*, 429ff.; Bahr, *Zu Meiner Zeit*, 511–17; Berggren, *Olof Palme*, 533ff.

was responsible for the report *Global Challenge*.<sup>48</sup> Finally, in 1987 Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland released the report *Our Common Future*.<sup>49</sup>

Although the SI focused on the above-mentioned interrelated issues, its 13th Congress decided that the struggle for détente and low tension between two military blocs was to be one of the primary focus areas in the years to come.<sup>50</sup> Hence, in the late 1970s a number of SI statements on the need for continued disarmament were issued. A 1977 "Remark on Disarmament" stated that the "struggle for a reduction of tensions and the attempt to call a halt to the arms race" were "inseparably linked together"; the superpowers shared a joint responsibility for the future; production of nuclear weapons implied a threat in itself, and so on.<sup>51</sup> The following year, the SI presented its détente policies at a conference on disarmament.<sup>52</sup> Thereafter an "SI Study Group" commenced work on a disarmament report that was finished in November 1980.<sup>53</sup> Among the members of the group were Kalevi Sorsa from Finland, Lionel Jospin from France, Alfons Pawelczyk from West Germany, and Max van der Stoep from the Netherlands.<sup>54</sup> The SI entered the international scene with a hitherto unseen self-confidence. In this phase, the late 1970s, the primary security policy goal of the SI was the completion of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) between the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>55</sup>

One particularly important SI statement was issued at an SI bureau meeting in Lisbon in late October 1979, only six weeks before NATO was expected to adopt its Dual-Track Decision on nuclear Euromissiles.<sup>56</sup> A key passage in the statement read:

<sup>48</sup> Manley and Brandt, *Global Challenge*.

<sup>49</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*.

<sup>50</sup> Christensen, *Nye mål i en ny verden*, 71. See Rother, "Between East and West," 225f.

<sup>51</sup> SWE/ARBARK SAP 1889/E/5/73. E.g., "Remarks on Disarmament," submitted to the Bureau of the Socialist International, Madrid, October 15 and 16, 1977.

<sup>52</sup> SWE/ARBAK SAP 1889/E/5/75, "Socialist International. Conference on Disarmament. Helsinki, April 24–26, 1978. Programme, List of Participants and Principal Speeches."

<sup>53</sup> NO/ARBARK DNA/SAGSARKIV1972–1985, BOX 243. Final Report of the Socialist International Study Group on Disarmament.

<sup>54</sup> SWE/ARBAK SAP 1889/E/5/80. SI General Secretary's Report, November 1980; NO/ARBARK DNA/SAGSARKIV BOX 221. "SAMAK—Helsingfors," December 2–3, 1979, MEMORANDUM.

<sup>55</sup> Rother, "Between East and West," 226.

<sup>56</sup> On the Dual-Track Decision, see Nuti, "The origins," 57–71.

We live in a most crucial period. Mankind is at the crossroads. If we fail to take new significant steps toward arms control and disarmament, there is the danger that we will face a new arms race and a new period of confrontation. There is even a risk of losing the historic achievements of détente, to which the socialists and social democrats have so devotedly contributed.

The Socialist International therefore strongly supports the ratification of the SALT II treaty by the United States and the Soviet Union without delay and urges those who seek to hinder the ratification to consider the serious consequences of such policy. The entering into force of this treaty would open new possibilities for progress in the Vienna negotiations and for the 2nd CSCE follow-up meeting in Madrid next year. . .

The Socialist International urges the governments concerned to embark on negotiation on the control and reduction of Euro strategic arms systems. Security cannot be enhanced by increasing armaments, but by removing the causes of mutual distrust and by taking practical measures for the limitation of existing arms and armed forces in a balanced way. The Socialist International strongly appeals to all governments in East and West to avoid in the meantime, any measures which could aggravate tension and render future negotiations more difficult and calls on them to do everything to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence.<sup>57</sup>

Shortly thereafter the Danish Social Democratic Party, then in government, changed its position regarding the Dual-Track Decision. In May 1979, the Social Democratic-Liberal coalition government publicly declared that NATO was falling behind the Soviet Union regarding the stockpile of tactical nuclear weapons,<sup>58</sup> and in early fall of 1979 Lasse Budtz, a prominent Social Democratic politician, stated that it was not possible to negotiate with the Soviet leadership unless Moscow was put under pressure.<sup>59</sup> After the Danish parliamentary elections on October 23, 1979, however, the liberal coalition party left government, thus enabling Anker Jørgensen to form a Social Democratic minority government; subsequently, the Social Democratic Party changed course. On October 29 Anker Jørgensen noted in his diary that he personally opposed Danish endorsement of the NATO Dual-Track Decision and hoped that the new foreign minister would agree with him.<sup>60</sup> A few days later the SI published the statement published above and on November 7, 1979—only a week after the SI statement—the Danish Social Democratic party publicly stated that the new Danish government would not necessarily accept de-

<sup>57</sup> NO/ARBARK DNA/SAGSARKIV, BOX 242. "Bureau Meeting in Lisbon, October 30–31, 1979. Statement."

<sup>58</sup> Poul Søgaard, *Folketingstidende* [The official report of Danish parliamentary proceedings], 1978–79, May 17, 1979, column 11067–71.

<sup>59</sup> Lasse Budtz, "Nedrustningsdebat efterlyses," *Ny Politik*, October 1979, 6.

<sup>60</sup> Jørgensen, *Brændingen*, 292.

ployment of NATO's missiles in Europe.<sup>61</sup> Two weeks later the Danish Social Democratic party argued that the decision should be postponed six months.<sup>62</sup> Although the decision may also have been influenced by the parliamentary elections, the party seems to have been influenced by discussions in the SI. Kjeld Olesen, then Denmark's foreign minister, has recently confirmed that discussions in the SI were of importance to the security policies of the Danish Labour Party in this period.<sup>63</sup> Other Social Democratic parties also seem to have been influenced by discussions in the SI. On the same day the Danish party expressed its doubts about NATO's approaching decision on the Euromissiles, the Dutch Labour Party demanded in Parliament that the NATO missile decision be suspended.<sup>64</sup> And labor parties in Belgium and the Netherlands eventually voted in favor of "no deployment" decisions in their own countries.<sup>65</sup>

## BOX 2: Social Democratic parties referenced

*Arbeiderpartiet*. The Norwegian Social Democratic Party  
*Labour Party*. The British Labour Party  
*Letzeburger Arbechter Partei/Parti Ouvrier Socialiste Luxembourgeois*. The Luxembourg Socialist Party  
*Parti Socialiste*. The French Socialist Party  
*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*. The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party  
*Partij van de Arbeid*. The Dutch Labour Party  
*Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano*. The Italian Democratic Socialist Party  
*Partito Socialista Italiano*. The Italian Socialist Party  
*Social Democratic Party*. The British Social Democratic Party  
*Socialdemokraterna*. The Swedish Social Democratic Party  
*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*. The Social Democratic Party of (West) Germany  
*The Panhellenic Socialist Movement*. The Greek Social Democratic Party  
*Vlaamse Socialistische Partij*. The Flemish Labour Party (Belgium)  
*Parti Socialiste (Belgique)*. The Wallonian Socialist Party (Belgium)

<sup>61</sup> Lund, *Avisårbogen* 1979, 175.

<sup>62</sup> "Raketterne," *Aktuelt*, November 24, 1979; "Regeringen vil have raket-beslutningen udsat halvt år," *Aktuelt*, November 24, 1979. See also Petersen, *Europæisk og globalt engagement*; DIIS, *Danmark under den kolde krig*, vol. 3, 95ff.

<sup>63</sup> Author's interview with Kjeld Olesen, November 8, 2013.

<sup>64</sup> "Hollands socialdemokrater: Nej til NATO's raket-udbygning," *Aktuelt*, October 8, 1979.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Lantis, *Domestic Constraints*, 87; Dujardin, "From Helsinki." See also Mariager, "Programmed to Arms Control?"

During the 1980s, the SI continued to promote its policies on détente and disarmament. In 1980, the SI organized a Party Leader Conference in Vienna where delegates issued a statement condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The SI saw the Soviet invasion as a symbol that the “desire for peaceful cooperation” had been replaced by a “disposition for confrontation.” Also, the SI condemned the intervention because the Soviets had “violated international law, as well as the sovereignty and right of self-determination” of Afghanistan.<sup>66</sup>

However, archival evidence suggests that the SI began to lose momentum in the early 1980s. In December 1981, the Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian, Icelandic, and Danish Social Democratic parties wrote a letter to Bernt Carlsson, SI general secretary, on the work and organization of SI, citing their concerns. Following Brandt’s election as SI president, the SI had grown immensely, presumably as a result of Brandt’s appeal to Third World countries. This was of course considered to be a great achievement. But according to critics, success also had unfortunate consequences: “The larger the meetings become, the more rhapsodically and superficially the issues are treated. The decisions are consequently taken after less serious and unsatisfactory discussions.”<sup>67</sup> In a European context the SI had become an inefficient body after the inspiring and dynamic era in the late 1970s.<sup>68</sup>

This loss of momentum may also have been related to internal disagreements among the members of the SI: between the French Parti Socialiste and the two Italian members Partito Socialista Italiano and Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano, on the one hand, and Northern European parties such as the West German SPD and the Scandinavian Social Democratic parties, on the other. The conflict surfaced after the introduction of martial law in Poland in 1981. Although Willy Brandt issued a statement on behalf of the SI condemning the repression, it was formulated in moderate terms. The French party would have preferred a more direct

<sup>66</sup> SWE/ARBAK SAP 1889/E/5/80, “Socialist International Party Leaders’ Conference, Vienna, 5–6 February 1980, Statement,” February 6, 1980.

<sup>67</sup> SWE/ARBAK SAP 1889/E/5/81. “Some Views on the Work and Organisation of the SI,” December 3, 1981.

<sup>68</sup> It should however be underlined that the SI seems to have become a more potent institution in the Third World during the early 1980s. According to information in the Norwegian Labour Party archives, the SI became so active in Latin America that the relationship between West European Social Democrats and the Reagan administration became quite strained. Washington was inclined to believe that the SI supported Marxist regimes and forces in the Western hemisphere. NO/ARBARK DNA/SIDEORDNET SAKSARKIV BOX 8, “Referat fra Møte i Internasjonalt Udvalg Mandag, March 9, 1981.”

condemnation of the Polish and Soviet backed move. The disagreement related to the much-debated question: how would the West be able to obtain the maximum amount of influence over the regimes in the communist bloc? Should the West interact with the communist countries and try to further changes through rapprochement, as Brandt and the adherents of Ostpolitik had argued since the 1960s? Or should the West pursue a more confrontational policy? This disagreement within the SI was also reflected during the discussions of the French nuclear *Force de Frappe*. The Parti Socialiste supported French maintenance of its nuclear force, whereas in particular the Nordic labor parties condemned them.<sup>69</sup>

As the SI lost momentum during the early 1980s, a new network emerged—Scandilux.

### Egon Bahr, Scandilux, and the Continuation of Ostpolitik

On January 10, 1981, representatives from a small group of Social Democratic parties met in Amsterdam to discuss security issues in Europe.<sup>70</sup> This time the hosts were two Belgian Social Democratic parties, the Walloon Parti Socialiste, and the Flemish Socialistische Partij. The gathering of the parties would have important future consequences. During the next ten years, the six labor parties met more than thirty times in a security policy forum named Scandilux.<sup>71</sup> Scandilux was an informal, inter-party forum for security and arms control between the Social Democratic (socialist) parties of the small NATO countries of Scandinavia and Benelux (the Danish, Norwegian, Luxembourgian, Dutch and the two Belgian labor parties).<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, labor parties from three large NATO countries—West Germany, Great Britain, and France—participated in the meetings as observers. Among the participants were Gro Harlem Brundtland and Thorvald Stoltenberg (Norway), Joop den Uyl and Klaas de Vries (Netherlands), Neil Kinnock and Michael Foot (Britain), Robert Goebbels (Luxembourg), Egon Bahr (West Germany), Kjeld Olesen, Lasse Budtz, Steen Christensen, and Svend Auken (Denmark). Willy

<sup>69</sup> Christensen, *Nye mål i en ny verden*, 40–41; cf. Petersen, “Scandilux og Danmark,” 66.

<sup>70</sup> DEN/ABM SDK BOX 1116. “Minute of the First Meeting in Scandilux,” January 10, 1981.

<sup>71</sup> The Danish Social Democratic Party’s archive contains a collection of minutes from the meetings in Scandilux. The collection consists of thirty-one minutes, cf. DEN/ABM SDK BOX 1116.

<sup>72</sup> For an elaboration of this, see Petersen, “The Scandilux Experiment.”

Brandt also participated in a number of meetings. In itself, it was an impressive collection of leading politicians.<sup>73</sup>

The establishment of Scandilux reflected a general trend toward transnationalism in Western Europe in the late 1970s and 1980s. But Scandilux was also established in light of three specific circumstances. The first included developments within the SI. Whereas the SI had been a dynamic and inspiring body for discussions between 1976 and 1980, its success also became its Achilles heel. With its growing membership which included countries from Latin America, Africa, etc., with disparate interests, the organization lost its focus on what the labor parties from European countries felt was most important: security policies. The result was a somewhat impotent organization without a distinct political focus. By establishing a small, informal forum for discussions on security policy containing like-minded parties only from Northwest Europe only, participants ensured that dialogue could be open and frank for all participants. Furthermore, the discussions could focus on one political topic exclusively, namely security issues in Europe, which was of immense importance to all participants in the forum.<sup>74</sup>

A second important factor in the establishment of Scandilux was the lessons drawn from NATO's Dual-Track Decision of December 1979. The Dutch party had opposed the decision in the Netherlands, the SPD—including Brandt and Egon Bahr—had voted in favor, and Danish Social Democrats proposed a postponement of six months in order for negotiations to be initiated with the Soviets. However, despite different situations and perceptions, most Social Democratic parties had one common sentiment: the United States had exerted undue pressure on European allies to support the decision. If the labor parties were to prevent the United States from exerting similar pressure in subsequent years, the parties needed a forum to discuss the challenges and a forum to coordinate their policies. As such, the intention behind Scandilux was to obtain increased European as well as Social Democratic influence over the security situation in Europe; a security situation that was dependent upon the superpowers and developments in the arms race.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> DEN/ABM SDK BOX 1116. "Minutes of the meetings in Scandilux"; see also Budtz, *Her stod vi af*, 197ff.

<sup>74</sup> Petersen, "The Scandilux Experiment."

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. In 1977–78, Washington had also tried hard to persuade its European allies to accept the production of the neutron bomb, and in 1978 the U.S. had strongly encouraged the Europeans to increase their defense budgets significantly. All in all, around 1980 a number of leading Social Democratic politicians in Northern Europe felt that the Carter administration had been exerting undue pressure on its European allies in NATO.

The third reason behind the creation of Scandilux was the new administration in Washington. During the election campaign in 1980, winning Republican candidate Ronald Reagan had presented the public with some of what Frances Fitzgerald has called the “most anti-Soviet rhetoric that the country [the U.S.] had heard in two decades.”<sup>76</sup> Many Europeans feared that Reagan would indeed scale down détente, and his presidency was viewed with skepticism.<sup>77</sup> Participants in Scandilux were aware that criticism of U.S. Cold War strategy might leave the labor parties open to charges of being “soft” on communism and the Soviet Union. Such charges were perceived as unjustified, however, since all the participating parties remained strongly anticommunist. Members in the Scandilux meetings insisted on a number of occasions that it was important to explain the Social Democratic position and to criticize rearmament programs in both the East and the West.<sup>78</sup>

It was in light of these specific circumstances that at an SI meeting in November 1980, Karl van Miert of the Belgian Socialist Party and Klaas de Vries of the Dutch Workers’ Party proposed the creation of a security policy forum for the smaller Social Democratic parties in the Northwest European NATO countries. Subsequently, the two parties composed the concept that was to be the point of departure for the work in Scandilux.<sup>79</sup>

What then, were the policies of the Scandilux? First and primarily it should be noted that the Scandilux did not officially pursue any specific policy. No official minutes from the meetings were taken, hence the existing minutes are unofficial and technically speaking private notes, and Scandilux officially did not make decisions. In 1983, the Belgian party suggested that a paper should be composed to provide the basis of the work in Scandilux, but this was refused by the Danish, Norwegian, and West German parties.<sup>80</sup> As such, it may be difficult to point out one particular political course decided by Scandilux. Having stated this, minutes from the meetings convince this author that Scandilux in reality func-

<sup>76</sup> Fitzgerald, *Way Out There*, 73.

<sup>77</sup> On the relationship between the United States and Western Europe following Reagan’s inauguration, see Lundestad, “The United States,” 47ff.; Wells, “Reagan, Euromissiles, and Europe,” 135ff.

<sup>78</sup> DEN/ABM SDK BOX 1116. E.g. “Minute of the First Meeting in Scandilux,” January 10, 1981.

<sup>79</sup> Petersen, “The Scandilux Experiment,” 5.

<sup>80</sup> DEN/ABM SDK BOX 1116, “Minute of the Second Meeting in Scandilux, 23–24 January 1983”; FES, EB 1/EBAA000780. Cf. Aufzeichnung. Skandilux-Treffen am 23./24. 1. 1983 in Bonn.



tioned as a nursery for new Social Democratic political initiatives in the ongoing negotiations between East and West especially in the early 1980s. Following the mid-1980s the influence of Scandilux seems to have diminished, presumably due to the improved East-West relations from around 1985 on.

One figure of great importance to Scandilux was Egon Bahr, the original creator of Ostpolitik, Willy Brandt's political sparring partner for decades, and former minister and member of the Bundestag 1972–90. As the SPD was not officially a member of the Scandilux, Bahr participated only as an observer. But Bahr took part in the meetings of Scandilux from March 1981, that is, from the second meeting.<sup>81</sup> And the minutes leave no doubt: Bahr was not just a reservoir of knowledge. His status was also that of a political thinker who inspired the other participants in the meetings.<sup>82</sup> The Scandinavian participants in particular seem to have been inspired by Bahr whom they considered a most visionary politician. Bahr thus participated in the Palme Commission which issued the report *Common Security* in 1982.<sup>83</sup> In November 1981, the Swedish government named Egon Bahr member of the board of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).<sup>84</sup> In 1986 the Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, and Swedish Social Democrats invited Egon Bahr to participate in a meeting in SAMAK, the Nordic Social Democratic discussion forum.<sup>85</sup> Lasse Budtz, one of the Danish participants in the Scandilux meetings, remembered years later that "Egon Bahr's analyses were very competent and clear and his background knowledge immense."<sup>86</sup>

Not only the Scandinavian labour parties were influenced by Scandilux. The British Labour Party adjusted its defense and security policies around 1980. Up until the beginning of the 1970s few leading Labour politicians believed that a deliberate Soviet attack on the West was likely. Neither did they believe it to be a likely event that the two superpowers

<sup>81</sup> DEN/ABM SDK BOX 1116, "Minute of the Second Meeting in Scandilux, 13–14 March 1981."

<sup>82</sup> E.g., November 21, 1983, September 21, 1983, January 6, 1984, and September 24, 1985.

<sup>83</sup> In 1980 Olof Palme asked for Bahr's advice when the Commission was to elect a new member from the United States. FES, EB 1/EBAA000588. "Bahr to Palme," April 18, 1980.

<sup>84</sup> FES, EB 1/EBAA000586. "'Sipri' beruft Bahr," *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, November 20, 1981.

<sup>85</sup> FES, EB 1/EBAA000780. SAMAK, Deltageforsteckning, June 1–2, 1986.

<sup>86</sup> Budtz, *De ansvarlige*, 21.

would engage in a war on European soil. This changed around 1980. Now, leading Labour politicians feared a nuclear war on European territory with the United States and the Soviet Union as belligerent nations. Labour politicians also began to fear the nature and location of NATO's nuclear weapons as they allegedly increased the risk of nuclear war in Europe. Following the publication of the *Common Security* report in 1982, the Labour Party publicly and explicitly accepted the program presented in the report.<sup>87</sup> Revisions of the party program were not made uncontested, however. In 1981, the so-called Gang of Four (Roy Jenkins, David Owen, Bill Rodgers, and Shirley Williams), left the party following the Wembley Conference which bound the party to unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from the EEC. Instead they formed the British Social Democratic Party (SDS). According to Dan Keohane, the changes in Labour's policies were influenced in part by discussions in Scandilux.<sup>88</sup> It should however be mentioned that these rather radical demands were presented in opposition to the Thatcher government, and that hardly any other Social Democratic party in Western Europe shared these demands at the time.<sup>89</sup>

Dialogue in Scandilux was in line with discussions in the SI. As shown above, in the 1970s Brandt argued that the labor parties needed to work with "common perspectives" as well as "national strategies." Minutes of the discussions in Scandilux show that this strategy was indeed carried through. To mention but one example: discussions often related to the troublesome INF issue (intermediate-range nuclear forces) on reduction of such weapons on both sides of the Iron Curtain.<sup>90</sup> The general modus was that Egon Bahr presented an analysis of the current situation. Following Bahr's analyses, the participants discussed how to transform them into practical national policies. This may help to explain why the Social Democratic parties in Norway and Denmark pursued a so-called footnote policy in the 1980s, which was often at odds with official NATO policies at the time.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Keohane, *Labour Party Defence Policy*, 56.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 35–36.

<sup>89</sup> Mariager, "Programmed to Arms Control?"

<sup>90</sup> On INF Talks and the 1987 Treaty, see Young, *America, Russia*, 163.

<sup>91</sup> Between 1982 and 1988 the Danish parliamentary opposition, led by the Social Democratic Party, imposed on the Conservative-Liberal minority governments to submit so-called Danish "footnotes" in official NATO documents, that is Danish reservations towards a number of NATO and U.S. nuclear policies. Instead of calling for general election, the Conservative-Liberal government decided to "co-exist with" the footnotes in order to stay in office. As argued by Nikolaj Petersen, the "result was a domestic strife,

**BOX 3: Leading Social Democrats in transnational Social Democratic networks**

|                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Benedetto Craxi       | Leonard Larsen       |
| Bernt Carlsson        | Mário Soares         |
| Bruno Kreisky         | Michael Foot         |
| Egon Bahr             | Neil Kinnock         |
| Felipe Gonzáles       | Olof Palme           |
| François Mitterand    | Poul Nielson         |
| Fred Mulley           | Reiulf Steen         |
| Gro Harlem Brundtland | Robert Goebbels      |
| Joop den Uyl          | Steen Christensen    |
| Karsten D. Voigt      | Thorvald Stoltenberg |
| Kjeld Olesen          | Willy Brandt         |
| Klaas de Vries        | Willy Claes          |
| Lasse Budtz           |                      |

One issue that attracted some interest among the Scandilux members was the idea of a Nordic nuclear weapon-free zone, discussed in Scandilux from early 1981. As such a zone would be of specific interest to the Nordic countries only, the idea never became *the* central topic during the discussions in Scandilux. However, the discussions were not unimportant. Nikolaj Petersen has shown convincingly how Norwegians and Danes used Scandilux to introduce the zone concept to other members of the forum, thus paving the way for the Palme Commission's proposal in 1982 to establish a 150-kilometer battlefield nuclear weapons free zone in Europe from the North through Central Europe to the southern flanks of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.<sup>92</sup> Another equally important result of the discussions was the concept of "common security," which was originally presented by the Palme Commission. Adopting this concept, the participating Scandilux parties argued subsequently that security problems in Europe (and globally) could only be solved through cooperation between the opposing powers. Therefore, the participants in Scandilux meetings appealed regularly for cooperation and common solutions to global challenges.<sup>93</sup>

Other results of the discussions in Scandilux related to more specific questions where the participants created a catalogue of ideas of how to curb or end the arms race. Among other items, the catalogue included a

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allied criticism and a policy which moved Denmark away from NATO's mainstream."

Petersen, "'Footnoting' as a political instrument"; Tamnes, *Oljealder*, 91–132.

<sup>92</sup> Petersen, "The Scandilux Experiment," 12.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in the NATO strategy, including removal of battle-field and medium-range tactical nuclear weapons, abandonment of the so-called deep-strike strategies against the enemy's rear area, and the "formulation of a 'defensive concept' for the defense of Western Europe," that is a defense that lacked offensive capabilities and therefore could only be used for defensive purposes.<sup>94</sup>

The European labor parties did not, however, agree on how to deal with the renewed superpower confrontation up to 1983. Most participating parties wished to promote détente and further Ostpolitik and the Helsinki process (the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE). The French Parti Socialiste disagreed with this strategy. Following the establishment of Scandilux in 1981, the French organized a corresponding Social Democratic Southern European discussion group named EURO-SUD. This forum also consisted of the Greek Labour Party PASOK, the Spanish PSOE, the Portuguese Labour Party as well as the two Italian labor parties (PSI and PSDI).<sup>95</sup>

## Conclusions and Perspectives

How do we explain the strained relationship between the United States and a number of Northern European countries in the late 1970s and early 1980s? First, historians should focus more on the role of values and ideas than scholars have done previously. If politics were based primarily on ideology, and if we intend to understand the dynamics and driving forces behind political developments and escalation of conflicts, we need to be conscious of the ideological understandings and priorities of the political players.

Second, European Social Democrats had been firm and loyal supporters of the Atlantic partnership ever since the formation of the Atlantic Pact back in 1949, and they maintained that position in the 1970s and 1980s. However, during the early Cold War period the systemic conflict between the communist and capitalist worlds was of decisive importance to the formulation of the policies of the Social Democratic parties. During the 1970s, a new situation arose. The labor parties continued to be firmly anticommunist, but the escalating nuclear arms race affected the parties. Should a world war have occurred, many Europeans feared that the nu-

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>95</sup> Christensen, *Nye mål i en ny verden*, 80–81.

clear battlefield would be in Europe—not in the Soviet Union or the United States.<sup>96</sup> This perspective influenced the labor parties which now had the ambition to increase Europe's influence on the East-West divide. Visits to Moscow by Social Democratic party delegations were not, therefore, attempts to placate Soviet leaders or accept Soviet Cold War policies. On the contrary, Social Democratic visits were used to express Social Democratic ambitions to deescalate the East-West confrontation and to demonstrate that Social Democrats did not fear the ideological competition between communism and democratic socialism.

Third, the growing disagreements between the United States and influential West European policy-makers are best understood as a struggle over NATO's political and military strategy toward the East-West conflict. Beginning in the early 1950s, Northern European Social Democratic politicians had urged NATO to promote dialogue with the Warsaw Pact countries, whereas the United States had been hesitant to follow this course. Following the Helsinki Accords in August 1975, this divide within NATO was aggravated to a degree that justifies the identification of three competing Grand Strategies within NATO. The United States—supported especially by Conservative and Liberal governments and politicians in Europe—wanted NATO to conduct a policy of strength; whereas a number of prominent Social Democratic politicians from Northwest Europe wanted NATO to continue the Ostpolitik that had been so important to the détente process between East and West. In between these two end positions a number of West European politicians and governments—Liberals, Conservatives, and Social Democrats—strived to maintain the balance of power and low tension between the East and the West.<sup>97</sup> Among these were British Conservative foreign secretary (1979–82) and later NATO general secretary (1984–88) Lord Carrington, along with West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher (1974–92), FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei), and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (SPD, 1974–82). They all strived to balance their policies. Perhaps the West German physicist and philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker spoke for more West European politicians when he stated: “A policy that divides the World into good and evil and perceives the greatest power, which it is our destiny is to live with, as the centre of evil, is not a policy of peace, even if its moral assessment is correct.”<sup>98</sup>

<sup>96</sup> See DIIS, *Danmark under den kolde krig*, vol. 3.

<sup>97</sup> See Nikolaj Petersen, “Koldkrigskrigen,” *Politiken*, January 10, 2006.

<sup>98</sup> Quoted after *Danmark under den kolde krig*, vol. 4, 93.

Fourth, as to the much debated question of whether détente died following 1975: the answer is no, at least not in Europe. Détente may have been temporarily abandoned by Washington and Moscow, but a large number of prominent European Social Democratic politicians strived to keep détente alive. To this end they continued to promote the Ostpolitik that had been of importance to the process that led to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

This chapter has presented general survey of common perspectives influencing the security thinking and security policies of a number of European Social Democratic parties in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A more comprehensive analysis of developments within Social Democratic security thinking will need to focus on the influence of security policy think tanks and the antinuclear weapons movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s, in particular the END (European Nuclear Disarmament) movement.<sup>99</sup> Also, a comprehensive investigation should focus on the security thinking among liberal conservative parties, not only in Europe but also in the United States.

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<sup>99</sup> See Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces*; Mariager and Schmidt, *PET's overvågning*.

## **PART IV**

# **DÉTENTE IN EUROPE: CHANGE IN PERCEPTIONS**





# Continuity and Transformation

## Alternate Visions of Italy's Three Decades of Détente

*Laura Fasanaro*

Looking at the history of détente from a long-term perspective does not only mean reconsidering its chronology or the theoretical approach to its very notion, but also requires looking at national or individual interpretations of this phenomenon. The question of what East-West détente has meant for middle-sized powers within the Atlantic Alliance in particular remains an open chapter in the history of the Cold War.

West European countries followed different paths toward détente and set their own national agenda for economic and political agreements with the countries of Eastern Europe. Joint efforts to develop common strategies eventually led to the CSCE, while at the same time common steps were taken to further improve the spirit and results of that negotiation within the EEC. Yet, national courses and individual interpretations were driving forces behind this process, propelled by political leaders who often stuck to opposite versions of the very concept of détente.

West European political parties are also crucial to the understanding of the different interpretations of détente in Europe: their vision of East-West relations strongly affected both their domestic political alliances and international relations. In some cases their approach to détente went beyond ideological boundaries and contributed to a reshape of their political priorities.

The case of Italy is the main focus of this chapter. In this book Italy is a peculiar example for two main reasons: the first one is that its undisputed allegiance to the Atlantic Pact was combined with an early and long-lasting *Ostpolitik*, which made Italy a country committed to détente for at least three decades; the second one is that in Italy's political debate the meanings of détente were manifold, as well as its goals and its potential outcomes.

This chapter analyzes the differences between the détente policies of the government and that of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), from the economic Ostpolitik of the former in the 1960s, championed by both the Christian Democracy Party (DC) and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), to the ideological challenge of the latter in the 1970s, which eventually culminated in political confrontation between the PCI and Moscow in the 1980s. At that time the foreign policy of the PCI went through major revisions inspired both by the new pro-European sentiments of the West European communists and by Enrico Berlinguer's own political vision, which took distance from both NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

The main point raised here is that while détente was a long-lasting aim of Italy's politics, the most influential political parties understood it differently: on the one hand, it was seen as a chance to further stabilize the bipolar system (the DC's main approach); on the other hand it was considered a lever to transform the system into a multipolar one (the PCI's). Interestingly enough, both perspectives implied an increased international role for either Italy's government, or the PCI toward their respective allies.

### **Italy's Long-Lasting Détente and Western Allegiance**

If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.  
—Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa<sup>1</sup>

Following the end of World War II, any government coalition in Italy had to set its foreign policy agenda and often had to manage internal political changes while listening carefully to its Atlantic partners' reactions. Atlanticism became the most important pillar of Italy's foreign policy and yet, with the beginning of peaceful coexistence in the late 1950s Italy's ruling political forces decided that it would be in Italy's best interest to foster

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<sup>1</sup> This famous quotation is taken from the novel *The Leopard* by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, published for the first time in 1958 and set in Sicily in the 1860s. It reports the protagonist Prince Fabrizio Salina's remark referring to the decline of the aristocracy era in Italy and the rise of a new political and social order in the wake of national unification. The quotation obviously refers to a different time in Italy's history than the one analysed in this essay: Salina's words have not been chosen here to suggest any comparison between the two periods, but rather because they brilliantly summarize the idea that continuity and change are not necessarily two opposite courses in politics and that the latter can serve the former.

bilateral commercial relations with the Soviet Union. The opening of relations with the Soviet Union dated back to the late 1950s within the context of so-called neo-Atlanticism, which aimed to develop a broader and more dynamic foreign policy and to advance Italy's international position while at the same time respecting its commitment to NATO.

Neo-Atlanticism emphasized the country's traditional mediating role in West European institutions, Mediterranean affairs, and East-West relations. A protagonist of this phase was Amintore Fanfani: upon taking leadership of the Christian Democracy and becoming president of the Council (1958), he was determined to play a primary role in foreign relations.<sup>2</sup> He shared this aim with Giovanni Gronchi, the president of the Republic, and with part of the Socialist Party. In domestic politics Fanfani carried out the so-called opening to the Left, namely the DC's agreement with the Socialist Party and the formation of the first government backed by a center-left coalition in 1962.<sup>3</sup>

Through most of the 1960s, center-left governments, later on led by Aldo Moro<sup>4</sup>—with Giuseppe Saragat, Moro and Fanfani, again, as Foreign Ministers between 1963 and 1968—recommended that Italy's foreign policy should remain firmly anchored to the Atlantic alliance, while at the same time exploring the new political chances given by peaceful coexistence. At that time Moscow put pressure on Rome to prevent the deployment of NATO nuclear missiles in Italy. As a way to decrease political tensions, Gronchi visited the USSR in February 1960. The results of this visit, an unprecedented step made by an Italian Head of State toward the Soviet Union, however, were poor: while Gronchi hoped to enhance Italy's chances of playing an active role in East-West talks, Khrushchev treated him essentially as the president of a U.S. satellite.<sup>5</sup> Yet, Gronchi's initiative indirectly favored commercial negotiations between the two countries. Another visit by Fanfani to the USSR would follow in early August 1961. The atmosphere of this second Italian-Soviet meeting looked more promising than the previous one, but Italy's attempts to foster East-West dialogue in the middle of the crisis of East German refugees

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<sup>2</sup> On Amintore Fanfani's foreign policy: Giovagnoli and Tosi, *Amintore Fanfani*; Martelli, *L'altro atlantismo*.

<sup>3</sup> The international implications of the opening to the Left are thoroughly analysed in Nuti, *Gli Stati Uniti*.

<sup>4</sup> Recent contributions on this phase of Italian politics are: Perfetti, "L'Italia, Moro e il centro-sinistra"; and, in the same volume, Donno, "Aldo Moro."

<sup>5</sup> Varsori, *L'Italia nelle relazioni*, 138.

were ultimately frustrated by the events that took place in Berlin one week later along with the building of the Wall.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the Christian Democrats' foreign policy activism did not cease: as a way to prove his political and personal commitment to détente and his (probably overestimated) trust in Italy's intermediary role in U.S.-Soviet relations, Fanfani wrote a letter to U.S. president Kennedy stressing the need to safeguard East-West relations and recommended that the Berlin Wall did not put an end to political interchange between the superpowers.<sup>7</sup>

These early political initiatives toward the Soviet Union paved the way for Italy's own Ostpolitik, which was extended to other Socialist countries and made Italy an active partner in the CSCE at the beginning of the 1970s. It also led to a revision of Italy's position on the German question and to the recognition of the GDR in 1973. Later on in the 1980s, the core of Italy's Ostpolitik survived the storm of the Euromissiles crisis. Accordingly, international détente under the aegis of NATO—and in accordance with the UN and the EEC—was continually referred to as a keyword by Italy's foreign policy-makers from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Due to the current fragmentary state of Italian archival sources the ups and downs of this relationship cannot yet be thoroughly analyzed, but some of its traits before and beyond the traditional periodization of the so-called great détente can already be assessed.

### **Rome and Moscow in the 1960s: Trade and Energy, but Not yet Security**

First, major trade deals were at stake, due to Italy's continuous search for energy reserves. The ENI (Italy's national hydrocarbons agency) was deeply involved from the beginning, aiming at securing oil supplies from the Soviet Union.

Approaching Soviet markets, however, was not free from political tensions: Italy's limited interest in Soviet products, with the exception of some raw materials, in fact, initially reduced the Italian companies' chances of increasing their exports to that country, as the Soviet government made quotas of imports from Italy directly dependent on Soviet exports, a principle generally adopted with other Western countries.

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<sup>6</sup> Ferraris, *Manuale della politica*, 116–17; Riccardi, “Appunti sull'Ostpolitik,” 63.

<sup>7</sup> Varsori, *L'Italia nelle relazioni*, 145.

Second, beginning in the early 1960s the competition between West European countries for a share of Soviet markets grew, partly due to the decision made by some of them to support their exports in the USSR with state credits, a policy which the Italian government was, instead, initially reluctant to adopt. Raising the imports of Soviet oil then was not only a response to Italy's structural energy needs, but also a necessary tool to allow for a "fair" share of Soviet markets by Italian firms.

Third, as Bruna Bagnato remarks, Italy's early moves in this direction were both the result of ENI's so-called oil diplomacy and the outcome of parallel diplomatic efforts. Enrico Mattei's moves were not entirely independent: between 1959 and 1961 negotiations for the expansion of Italian-Soviet business also involved the Italian Embassy in Moscow.<sup>8</sup>

The government soon realized the advantages that an increase in oil imports from the USSR would entail for Italian exports, since the former would provide the Soviets with necessary credits to buy Italian goods. An agreement was sealed, then, between ENI and SNE in October 1960 and was later on included in the long-term trade agreement, signed in June 1961: these settlements opened the path to a momentous expansion of trade relations.<sup>9</sup>

In February 1964 another deal was agreed upon by the two ministers of foreign trade, Nikolai Patolichev and Bernardo Mattarella, referring to an additional protocol to increase between 15 percent and 20 percent of the volume of import-export (compared to the 1961 agreement) between 1962 and 1965; a credit deal involving Italian banks and allowing for an increase in the export of Italian capital goods; a trade agreement for the period 1966–69, under which an annual growth of import-export trade of about 10 percent (if compared to 1965) was expected.

At the same time, the previous trade pattern was maintained: the USSR would continue to supply Italy with raw materials—oil first, but also coal and other minerals—timber and basic chemicals in exchange for finished products, industrial equipment, machinery, various chemicals, synthetics, plastics, citrus fruits, and consumer goods.<sup>10</sup>

These agreements marked the beginning of trade interdependence, but not yet political détente with Moscow. Political talks remained essentially

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<sup>8</sup> Bagnato, "Diplomazia." On these themes see also, Bagnato, *Prove di Ostpolitik*, and Tavani, "Alle origini dell'*Ostpolitik*."

<sup>9</sup> Bagnato, *Diplomazia petrolifera*, 203. See also Tavani, "L'*Ostpolitik* italiana."

<sup>10</sup> Archivio centrale dello Stato (hereafter ACS), Aldo Moro archive, B. 71, "Nota del Ministero degli Affari Esteri per il Consigliere diplomatico del Presidente del Consiglio. Appunto per il Ministro, Roma," February 3, 1964.

volatile.<sup>11</sup> Prime Minister Aldo Moro warned against “isolated initiatives” to be taken by any of the Atlantic partners, which might “disintegrate” the two existing political and military alliances and challenge the “stability and balance” of the European continent. The end of the two blocs would be an eventual result of détente and should not be accelerated by any of such initiatives.<sup>12</sup>

Beginning in the mid-1960s, however, the Soviets tried to involve the Italians in discussions around such key political matters pertaining to East-West relations as the problem of the creation of a collective/multilateral nuclear force and the stabilization of European borders.

The Soviets addressed relevant international matters incidentally, calling them, in general, problems of “European security.” Italy’s ambassador to the USSR Federico Sensi argued that the Soviets were beginning a kind of political strategy toward Italy, in line with the one they adopted with other western countries, in which they made reference to those issues that looked less urgent to their interlocutors (including, for example, the recognition of German borders) just to test them and eventually see if there was a chance to discuss more sensitive issues.<sup>13</sup>

After a conversation with the director general for West European Affairs Anatoly Kovalev and referring to the issue of German borders, Sensi significantly reported: “This is the first time that this argument is mentioned with me, even though only incidentally and not at political level.”<sup>14</sup> These attempts, however, were counterproductive, as they embarrassed the Italians who would refuse to treat these matters informally and bilaterally: as Sensi remarked, the risk to find oneself involved in bilateral talks on these topics should be avoided.

Before the CSCE negotiations set a multilateral framework to deal with “European security” matters, then, Italy’s main interest toward the

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<sup>11</sup> Ferraris, *Manuale della politica*, 237–42.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Aldo Moro, *Il Popolo*, June 21, 1966, in Moro, *Scritti e discorsi*, vol. 4, 2146ff.

<sup>13</sup> See for example in ACS, Aldo Moro archive, B. 71, the Italian ambassador in Moscow Federico Sensi’s letters to the Foreign Minister Fanfani of July 1, 1965 [Rapporto dell’Ambasciatore d’Italia a Mosca Federico Sensi al Ministro degli Esteri Amintore Fanfani, n. 2335, Mosca, 1° luglio 1965, segreto] and to the secretary general of the Italian Foreign Ministry Amb. Felice Catalano di Melilli of September 16, 1965 [Lettera dell’Ambasciatore d’Italia a Mosca al Segretario generale del Ministero degli Affari Esteri Amb. Felice Catalano di Melilli, Mosca, 16 settembre 1965, segreto].

<sup>14</sup> ACS, Aldo Moro archive, B. 71, “Rapporto dell’Ambasciatore d’Italia a Mosca Federico Sensi al Ministro degli Esteri Fanfani, n. 2335,” July 1, 1965.

USSR was essentially economic and commercial. Italian diplomats would limit their exchange of views with the Soviets to such issues as the new agreement with FIAT, Italy's largest car industry company, a deal which promised to become a huge investment, or the protocol for cultural exchanges.<sup>15</sup>

### **Aldo Moro's Foreign Policy: Political Détente within Ideological Boundaries**

This early economic Ostpolitik helped the Italians reach their goal of stronger international prestige and reduced the risk of isolation in the competition for new markets. Italian-Soviet relations also helped secure diplomatic routes to Yugoslavia and Romania and opened new ones to Bulgaria and Poland—the latter to become Italy's second trade partner in Eastern Europe<sup>16</sup>—and the German Democratic Republic.<sup>17</sup>

Launched by Aldo Moro in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Italy's East European diplomacy expanded, promoting Italian products and diversifying energy suppliers. Recent studies on Moro's foreign policy in the Balkans have revealed not only Italy's dynamism in this region—contrary to a traditional view which tended to consider Italian politics in the 1970s as entirely focused on domestic problems and the relationship with the United States—but also a better understanding of Moro's vision of international relations.<sup>18</sup>

Moro strongly encouraged Willy Brandt's political vision from its inception.<sup>19</sup> He also made himself the promoter of a European conference

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<sup>15</sup> ACS, Aldo Moro archive, B. 71, "Lettera dell'Amb. Sensi al Segretario generale del MAE Amb. Catalano di Melilli," September 16, 1965. For a detailed account of Italy-USSR relations in 1965–68, see also Salacone, "Le relazioni italo-sovietiche."

<sup>16</sup> See Tavani, "L'Ostpolitik italiana," 296.

<sup>17</sup> On Italy's relations with Ceausescu's Romania, see Basciani, "Tra aperture e neo-stalinismo." On Italian-Yugoslavian relations, in the same volume, Monzali, "I nostri vicini" and Bucarelli, "Aldo Moro e l'Italia"; on Bulgaria, same volume, Imperato, "I rapporti italo-bulgari." The field of research of Italian-East German relations has been badly neglected by Italian historians, with few exceptions: a detailed picture of the existing scholarly literature on this subject can be found in Lorenzini, "La storiografia italiana."

<sup>18</sup> See Garzia, Monzali, and Bucarelli, *Aldo Moro, l'Italia repubblicana*; Perfetti, Ungari, Caviglia, and De Luca, *Aldo Moro nell'Italia contemporanea*; Moro and Mezzana, *Una vita, un paese*.

<sup>19</sup> Meneguzzi, "La politica estera italiana." On the same period, see also Giovagnoli and Pons, *L'Italia repubblicana*.

on security that his predecessor Pietro Nenni had fostered during his short term as foreign minister (winter 1968–summer 1969), in the wake of a similar Soviet proposal.<sup>20</sup>

After the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the development of West German Ostpolitik, détente was officially adopted as the main focus of Italy's policies toward the Soviet Bloc countries.<sup>21</sup> In general, it was regarded as a positive outcome that could help stabilize the international environment and as a chance for Italy to develop its own East European diplomacy. From the perspective of the Italian Foreign Ministry, moreover, connecting Italy's Ostpolitik to West Germany's would help the former securing an alternative route to East European markets in case bilateral negotiations were hampered by the worsening of Italy's economic situation:

The countries of Eastern Europe have now overcome their take off phase and, at different levels, are directing toward new forms of economy, more diversified and with significant consumerist aspects, which of course we should not discourage. . . . It looks appropriate . . . to start an informal dialogue with the Western Germans, both at the bilateral and multilateral level, with the aim to operationally advance our penetration in East European markets. This approach to the problem looks necessary to Italy, considering in particular the current economic conjuncture, which impedes our broader use of credit tools. These, indeed, have turned out to be the only efficient tools for the penetration of East European markets, given the difficulty of finding a compensation in our exports, if not in low margins.<sup>22</sup>

International détente was fast developing into a more complex phenomenon: rapid political changes were in progress in West European societies, as well as in international relations. Détente, then, was also regarded as a process which needed to be managed in order to prevent unpredictable consequences.

These might be either a Europe-United States rift or the isolation of West Germany in its Ostpolitik, or an uncontrolled rush into European security negotiations to the Soviet Union's advantage.<sup>23</sup> While Moro

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<sup>20</sup> Meneguzzi, "Aldo Moro." On Italian-West German relations during the CSCE negotiation, see Zilio, *Roma e Bonn*.

<sup>21</sup> Ferraris, *Manuale della politica*, 237.

<sup>22</sup> ACS, Fondo Aldo Moro, B. 130, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MAE), "Preliminary note for the meeting of Foreign Minister Aldo Moro with the Foreign Minister of the FRG Walter Scheel [Aspetti economici della nuova fase della politica della Germania occidentale verso i paesi dell'Est europeo]," September 1970.

<sup>23</sup> Meneguzzi, "La politica estera italiana," 362–65.



praised the value of economic, political and even “cultural” détente—to the point of considering it as the lever of social progress in both blocs—he believed that it should not come to the point of reversing the existing and deeply rooted ideological differences.

In 1965, in one of his speeches as Prime Minister he had emphasized that: “we feel increasingly independent as members of the Atlantic alliance, since this has allowed us to gain security in peace and to get the chance of negotiating with any other country in the world based on equal rights.”<sup>24</sup> Moro considered continuity with the past, the maintenance of a stable international order and Italy’s Atlanticist identity as intertwined, and a premise for détente. NATO was an essential “peace coefficient”.<sup>25</sup>

The Atlantic Pact not only has ensured our security in the past, and it still does today, but also has represented, and still represents, the basis for the beginning of a dialogue between East and West, as well as the premise for the opening of an effective détente policy. It is only by fully respecting its loyalty to the Atlantic Alliance that Italy has been able to engage itself in working toward a more stable and peaceful organization of international relations.<sup>26</sup>

Later in his term as foreign minister, Moro kept on promoting a cautious détente and a gradual normalization of East-West relations, motivated by a “realistic” and “responsible” vision of international changes.<sup>27</sup> Moro’s foreign policy remained in substance constant, being multilateralism,<sup>28</sup> Atlantic solidarity and European integration his primary goals. At the same time, he held mediation and negotiation as Italy’s best political tools to improve its international stance.

In the 1970s, however, Italy’s foreign policy would be also characterized by a growing feeling of uneasiness and mistrust regarding both the United States’ commitment to Europe and Italy’s declining role within NATO.

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<sup>24</sup> Moro, *La politica estera del centro-sinistra: intervento alla Camera dei Deputati*, October 13, 1965, [http://storiadc.it/doc/1965\\_cesteri\\_moro.html](http://storiadc.it/doc/1965_cesteri_moro.html).

<sup>25</sup> Moro, *I rapporti con gli Stati Uniti. Intervento sulla politica estera alla Camera dei Deputati*, May 14, 1965, [http://www.storiadc.it/doc/1965\\_cusa\\_moro.html](http://www.storiadc.it/doc/1965_cusa_moro.html).

<sup>26</sup> Moro, *La politica estera del centro-sinistra: intervento alla Camera dei Deputati*, October 13, 1965, [http://storiadc.it/doc/1965\\_cesteri\\_moro.html](http://storiadc.it/doc/1965_cesteri_moro.html).

<sup>27</sup> Speech delivered by Aldo Moro to the Chamber of Deputies, October 21, 1969, “Per una intesa fra i popoli,” in *Scritti e discorsi*, vol. 5, 2813ff.

<sup>28</sup> Luca Riccardi argues that the UN were seen by Moro as the ideal field of cooperation with the USSR since its early contacts with the Soviet government in 1964 (Riccardi, “Appunti sull’Ostpolitik,” 58).

The search for new room of maneuver in Italy's relations with the USSR and its allies, therefore, can also be considered as a consequence of this political decline and the loss of its rank within the Atlantic alliance.<sup>29</sup> Maintaining a position based on prestige and an equal share of responsibility with the other European powers was a main concern for the Christian Democratic Party in power, due also to its profound credibility crisis.<sup>30</sup>

A number of different factors, therefore, contributed to Italy's initiatives toward the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including the DC's awareness that major changes were taking place in Europe and in transatlantic relations, in front of which Italy should avoid the risk of remaining isolated.

None of these elements, however, suggested that the normalization of the relations with Eastern Europe should encourage the overcoming of the two blocs. On the contrary, it reflected an overall static and conventional view of détente, based on Italy's long-standing economic relations with the Eastern bloc, its active participation in multilateral talks and the intensification of bilateral diplomacy, with a view to reinforcing the existing European order, rather than transforming it.

### **Rome, East Berlin, and the German Problem**

An important step along the same lines was the opening of diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic in 1973, made possible by Bonn's new approach to the German question.

Before Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik, the sound and steady relationship between Italy and the FRG, reinforced by their common interests within the EEC and NATO, led Italian postwar governments to reject any of the various attempts made by the East German government or by single East German personalities to begin bilateral relations. Ironically, this was also one of the arguments used by some East German politicians—before Italy's official acknowledgement—to criticize Italy's "dependence" on the FRG and put emphasis on the GDR's alleged independence and its true Socialist identity.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Nuti, "La politica estera italiana."

<sup>30</sup> On this subject, see Fasanaro, "The Eurocommunism Years."

<sup>31</sup> Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (hereafter PA AA), MfAA, C223/77, "Die Haltung der Regierung und der verschiedenen politischen und wirtschaftlichen Kräfte Italiens zur Normalisierung der Beziehungen zur DDR," (vertraulich), Rome, November

At the same time, Italy's government viewed potential German reunification with deep worry and hoped for the maintenance of two German states: the Italians' untold concern was that in the case of reunification, Germany would be forced to review its foreign policy agenda and loosen its commitment to NATO and European integration.

Charis Pöthig has interestingly commented on Italy's ambivalence on this issue, arguing that in the wake of West Germany's Ostpolitik the solidarity between Bonn and Rome was seriously at risk due to Italy's conception of European security, which from a strategic point of view was much closer to the GDR's than to the FRG's, as it comprised the immutability of the borders set after World War II.<sup>32</sup> For all these reasons, East Berlin looked at Italy's domestic and foreign policy with much interest. In November 1969, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the GDR issued a long report that argued that although Italy was looking for a front row seat in the rising competition with the other West European countries who were increasing their investments in Eastern Europe, its relations with the socialist countries were still determined by NATO and the European Community.

Italy's recognition of the GDR, then, was not to be taken for granted: on the contrary, after almost ten years of trade relations with Moscow, Italy still discriminated against the GDR, not only politically, but also in terms of trade conditions in order to respect "the pretended superiority of West German imperialism."<sup>33</sup>

Italy's views on the German question looked contradictory, due also to such domestic factors as the PCI's campaign for the recognition of the GDR:

On the other hand, certain national security interests play their role in the way [Italy] looks at the "German problem": the Italian government, leading economic and political circles of the DC, the PSI and the PSU are interested neither in a change of the territorial status quo in Europe done through force, nor in an increase in the economic, political and military power of West Germany. In this sense, therefore, the current situation,

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11, 1969; MfAA, C223/77, AV Italien, "Fortschreibung der Einschätzungen vom 30.11.1969 und 16.3.1970 über die Haltung der Regierung und der verschiedenen politischen und wirtschaftlichen Kräfte Italiens zur Normalisierung der Beziehungen zur DDR," Rome, October 20, 1970.

<sup>32</sup> Pöthig, *Italien und die DDR*.

<sup>33</sup> PA AA, MfAA, C223/77, "Die Haltung der Regierung und der verschiedenen politischen und wirtschaftlichen Kräfte Italiens zur Normalisierung der Beziehungen zur DDR," November 11, 1969; see also MfAA, C223/77, AV Italien, "Fortschreibung der Einschätzungen vom 30.11.1969 und 16.3.1970," October 20, 1970.

namely the existence of two German states is for Italian influential circles suitable and gives certain guarantees.<sup>34</sup>

Through the following decade bilateral relations slowly improved, essentially surviving the crisis of East-West relations of the early 1980s but not without a certain deal of frustration given by the ups and downs of trade flows.

The Italians saw in the uninterrupted dialogue between Bonn and East Berlin a unique chance to ensure the follow-up of détente in Europe<sup>35</sup> and release some of those domestic tensions that had resulted from the new phase of confrontation initiated by the nuclear rearmament crisis of the late 1970s, NATO's "dual-track" decision of December 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the same month. The maintenance of détente in Europe would help appease Italy's domestic political unrest in a context strongly influenced by international events and where the Cold War was mirrored by the split between the left-wing parties (PCI and PSI), the DC's power (despite its embarrassing internal corruption and decline), and the massive popular discontent caused by Italy's decision to take part in the deployment of Euromissiles.

The GDR, although a controversial partner for a number of reasons, including domestic repression of political liberties and human rights, was an essential part of a stabilized and peaceful European order.

At the same time, from an East European perspective the development of economic relations with West European countries competing with each other was seen as a strategy to divide them politically and to possibly weaken NATO's rearmament policy. In 1979, the secretary for International Relations of the East German Socialist Unity Party Hermann Axen stated that Western governments would contribute to a revision of NATO's nuclear plans if the advantages of economic cooperation with the Socialist countries prevailed over their idea of Atlantic solidarity.<sup>36</sup>

Though this was perhaps an overestimation of the Socialist countries'—and in particular the GDR's—ability to affect transatlantic rela-

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<sup>34</sup> PA AA, MfAA, C223/77, "Die Haltung der Regierung und der verschiedenen politischen und wirtschaftlichen Kräfte Italiens zur Normalisierung der Beziehungen zur DDR," November 11, 1969.

<sup>35</sup> On the FRG-GDR relations in the aftermath of the "great détente," see Bange, "Keeping Détente Alive."

<sup>36</sup> Bundesarchiv (hereafter BA), SAPMO, Büro Axen, IV 2/ 2.035/ 23. "Rede H. Axen . . . auf der Konferenz der Sekretäre für ideologische und internationale Fragen . . . in Berlin," July 3–5, 1979.

tions, there was some truth in Axen's words. One of Italy's hoped-for outcomes of economic détente was to extend its initial trade interdependence with the USSR to other countries of the Soviet Bloc, and to stabilize its economic and political relations with them.

### **Italy's Ostpolitik between the National Solidarity Government of the 1970s and the New Center-Left Government of the 1980s**

The revival of East-West relations was also instrumental to withstand Italy's economic and political crisis during the second half of the 1970s. Similarly to his predecessors, Christian Democrat Giulio Andreotti, who was president of the Council of Ministers in 1972–73 and again in 1976–79, encouraged a foreign policy turned to the East.

A remarkable result in this direction was Andreotti's official visit to Moscow in October 1972, with a large delegation including economists, industrialists, and bankers. On that occasion a protocol on Italian–Soviet political cooperation was signed, together with a ten-year agreement for economic, technical, and scientific cooperation.<sup>37</sup>

As suggested by Soviet ambassador to Italy Nikita Ryzhov two weeks before the meeting, not only the interests of Italian industries and trade agencies in the USSR—ENI, FIAT, Montedison, Finsider, IRI—would be better protected after these agreements, but new kinds of energy deals would also be put in place. Natural gas had entered the energy mix of West European countries and the Soviet Union began a competitive policy in order to become their main supplier.

As a country with structural energy deficiencies and important industrial investments in the USSR, Italy became a favorite client. The mutually beneficial relationship based upon Soviet energy in exchange for Italian finished products, capital goods, and technology characterized the following decade and a half of the Cold War.

Contrary to the past, moreover, the Italian government now provided the Soviet Union with consistent credit flows, thereby allowing for considerable growth of Italian exports: in 1975, for example, Soviet imports of Italian goods increased by 98 percent compared to 1974.

Meanwhile, social unrest and political instability had dramatically grown in Italy: from 1976 to 1979 Andreotti led the so-called national solidarity government, a DC majority government indirectly supported by

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<sup>37</sup> Tavani, "L'Ostpolitik italiana," 249–50.

the PCI's abstention in Parliament, and based upon an agreement between the two parties on Italy's economic and social agenda.

In the second half of the 1970s, a reversal in the above-mentioned trade balance, with a change of import-export volume in favor of Soviet energy exports, and the worsening of the economic crisis in Italy made it more difficult to allocate new resources to the USSR. Despite this setback, however, Rome agreed to the Italian industrialists' requests to maintain Italy's credit policy and in May 1979 another protocol of Italian-Soviet cooperation was signed in Rome.

As a consequence of the events of December 1979, the rise of the Polish crisis and U.S. sanctions against Moscow, Italy's trade relations with the USSR were "frozen" again for a short period of time. Opposed by Italian industrialists, the economic Cold War lasted until 1981, when the Italian government reallocated state credits to the USSR. The renewal of the agreement for Soviet energy supplies remained controversial, until it was finally sealed in 1984.<sup>38</sup>

Andreotti was also Foreign Minister during the center-left governments of 1983–87, led by the leader of the Socialist party Bettino Craxi.

With the aim to improve Italy's Ostpolitik during that time Andreotti and Craxi saw the potential of restoring relations with the GDR in particular, a country that shared with Italy the goal of safeguarding détente in Europe. Craxi was the first Italian head of government visiting East Germany in July 1984, an event greatly valued by the SED leadership, also because it followed the visit of former foreign minister Colombo in the GDR in 1983.

From an East German perspective, these exchanges proved the GDR's dynamism toward Western Europe and restarted political dialogue with Italy after the apathy of the period between 1979 and 1982.<sup>39</sup> Two main points were raised during bilateral talks in East Berlin in the summer of 1984: the first one was the restoration of economic and trade cooperation, which had slowed down in previous years; the second one was the failure of the Geneva negotiations and the actual deployment of NATO intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 253–304.

<sup>39</sup> BA, SAPMO, DY 30/ 2450, Büro Honecker (fiche 3), "Niederschrift über das Gespräch des Generalsekretärs des Zentralkomitees der SED und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Erich Honecker, mit dem Ministerpräsidenten der Italienischen Republik, Bettino Craxi am 9. Juli 1984 in Berlin"; BStU, MfS, HA II, n. 34453, "Memorandum on the political and economic situation in Italy and Italy's foreign policy" (n.d. but likely the end of June 1984).

While the first point led to a concrete agreement, the second one remained indefinite overall. Records of the Craxi-Honecker talks on the issue of nuclear rearmament give the impression that both politicians were pretending they could play a greater role than they could realistically expect in the context of their respective military alliances. Discussion on this point was overall inconsistent: the two parties generally agreed that they disagreed on the roots and causes of the crisis and that, nevertheless, disarmament would still be possible in the future if similar middle-sized powers were able to maintain safe and constant relations with each other.

Yet common efforts made to save the spirit and practice of peaceful coexistence, given the lack of any other "reasonable alternative," were pointed out by Erich Honecker both in Berlin during Craxi's visit, and in Rome during his official stay in Italy in Spring 1985.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, Andreotti's statement in September 1984 arguing that the rise of a new kind of pan-Germanism should be prevented, as a potential consequence of the rapprochement between the two German states, offered the SED leadership another chance to reaffirm that closer relations with the FRG would not lead to reunification.<sup>41</sup>

From an Italian standpoint, East Germany would never abandon this course and would keep on supporting a conception of détente based on the maintenance of the existing European political order, since its domestic support and the very definition of its "national" identity depended on it.<sup>42</sup> This increased the GDR's credibility as a valuable interlocutor in the Eastern bloc. Also, shortly before Honecker's arrival in Rome in April 1985, a more independent relationship between the East German government and the Soviet Union was noted by Bettino Craxi's diplomatic advisor Antonio Badini as a positive outcome of détente: "In exchange for its full loyalty in the field of security and in the balance of power, Berlin claims for larger room of maneuver in foreign policy, in particular in its relations with the FRG and the West."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> BA, SAPMO, DY 30/ 2450 (fiche 4), Büro Honecker, "Bericht über den offiziellen Besuch . . . Erich Honecker[s] vom 23. bis 24. April 1985 in der Italienischen Republik."

<sup>41</sup> Indelicato, *Martello e compasso*, 126.

<sup>42</sup> Archivio Fondazione Craxi, Busta 155/ Fasc. 3, "Ufficio del Consigliere Diplomatico del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, Nota sui rapporti bilaterali Italia-RDT in vista della visita di Erich Honecker in Italia," April 23–24, 1985 (n.d. but likely April 22, 1985).

<sup>43</sup> Archivio Fondazione Craxi, Busta 155/ Fasc. 39, "Ufficio del Consigliere Diplomatico del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, Nota sui rapporti bilaterali Italia-RDT," (n.d. but likely April 22, 1985). On the reasons for the GDR-USSR crisis of the early 1980s

Interestingly, the East Germans viewed Italy in the same light: in one of their frequent evaluations of Italy's domestic and foreign policy situation, they recognized that under Craxi's leadership Italy was reclaiming its independence from the United States—at least in the field of foreign trade relations.<sup>44</sup> These were clearly the main focus for both: economic détente looked, again, to be a tool for political détente without essentially affecting each of these two countries' alignments to their respective military blocs.

In 1983 the GDR received financial credits for around 200 million dollars to help Italian exports in that country, in particular the semi-finished products of chemical, steel and textile industries.

In 1984 Italian exports in the GDR increased by 78.5 percent compared to the previous year; other agricultural products and various kinds of consumer goods, moreover, were added to the list of exports to East German chain stores.<sup>45</sup> According to another SED analysis, Italy's industrial circles had been badly damaged by the recent worsening of East-West relations and were now trying to recover their relations with East European partners.<sup>46</sup>

In July 1984 the Beil-Ruggero agreement was sealed by the respective representatives of the two ministries for Foreign Trade, Gerhard Beil and Renato Ruggero. This was a kind of road map for further development of economic, technological, and scientific relations. In April 1985, during Honecker's visit to Rome, it was followed by a ten-year agreement on economic, industrial, and technical cooperation.

As in the 1960s, economic détente progressed, in spite of a political stalemate between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but now the GDR had become an ambitious player in this game, trying to reinforce its mediating role within the Soviet Bloc and with Western Europe. From an Italian

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which led the East German government to a more autonomous stance in its Western relations, see Wentker, *Aussenpolitik in engen Grenzen*, 477ff. See also, from an Italian perspective, Indelicato, *Martello e compasso*.

<sup>44</sup> BA, SAPMO, DY 30/ IV 2/ 2.035/ 103, Abt. Italien, "Information über einige aktuelle Aspekte der italienischen Aussen- und Innenpolitik im Zusammenhang mit dem Besuch des Gen. Honecker vom 23.4 bis 24.4.1985 in Italien."

<sup>45</sup> Arch. Fondazione Craxi, Busta 155/ Fasc. 39, "Ufficio del Consigliere Diplomatico del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, Nota sui rapporti bilaterali Italia-RDT," (n.d. but likely April 22, 1985).

<sup>46</sup> BA, SAPMO, DY 30/ IV 2/ 2.035/ 103, Abt. Italien, "Information über einige aktuelle Aspekte der italienischen Aussen- und Innenpolitik im Zusammenhang mit dem Besuch des Gen. Honecker vom 23.4 bis 24.4.1985 in Italien."



point of view, once the German question had been temporarily “answered” by the two German states, the GDR could be simply considered as an additional element of political stability in Europe and as a government that shared a common perception of détente.

### **The PCI: Détente and Transformation**

East-West détente also had many implications inside the two blocs. Not only did it change the perception of the kind of threat coming from the countries beyond the Iron Curtain, but it also raised unexpected political, social, and ideological challenges to the internal stability of both the Western and the Eastern alliances.

The PCI was the largest communist party in Western Europe; in Italy it played a central role as the strongest opposition party since 1947. A political force deeply rooted within Italian society in the aftermath of World War II, the PCI was strongly committed to national political goals beginning with its direct involvement in the making of the postwar Italian Republican institutions.

Within the international communist movement, the PCI displayed a more independent course than all other West European communist parties since the end of the war and gradually—though not yet officially—abandoned its revolutionary strategy, while remaining entirely aligned to Soviet foreign policy until the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Strong criticism toward the Soviet Union and its allies for their limitation of political liberties was raised after these dramatic events. Through the 1970s and 1980s this critical attitude grew incessant and inspired a different kind of challenge against the USSR, if compared to those differences which had made the relationship with Moscow difficult in the past, but had remained essentially limited within the boundaries of the communist movement.<sup>47</sup>

The ideological challenge of the 1970s went to the very heart of the PCI-CPSU relationship: Eurocommunism suggested a model of communism distinct from the Soviet one at a time when the progress of international détente allowed for a release of tensions between Western governments and West European communist parties, eventually opening the possibility for the latter to take part in their respective governments.

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<sup>47</sup> On this topic, see Pons, “L’Italia e il PCI.”

Enrico Berlinguer, the secretary general of the PCI, envisaged an ambitious role for his party<sup>48</sup> and saw the progress of international détente as a unique chance to make concrete steps to achieve this goal, both domestically and internationally.

Beginning in the late 1960s, the PCI's chances within Italy's political scenario grew, the risk perception of a Communist takeover decreasing with the PCI's proposal of the "historic compromise" and the public opinion's trust in its larger autonomy from the Soviet Union increasing with its final endorsement of the EEC.

New social strata—large portions of the middle-class and the young—were conquered due also to widespread discontent with the center-left's management of the economic and financial crisis and the PCI's new emphasis on the need to "clean" Italian politics from corruption and bribery (*questione morale*). The growth of domestic consensus led to two striking electoral successes at the local elections of 1975 and the national polls of June 1976 after which the Communist Party accepted an agreement with the DC and backed a centrist government with its parliamentary abstention until 1979.

This politics of alliances, an essential part of the PCI's national strategy, however, lasted only for this brief period of time, after which the Communist Party lost electoral consensus and went back to the role of opposition.

Scholarly literature is divided between those who consider Eurocommunism essentially as the result of the PCI's domestic strategy, a narrow political phenomenon which failed in carrying out its full emancipation from the Soviet model of communism; and those who, instead, underline its remarkable international implications.<sup>49</sup>

Much depends on which angle is chosen: Eurocommunism's impact on Italy, France, and Spain—the three countries where communists agreed on a common political course in the mid-1970s<sup>50</sup>—was overall limited and

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<sup>48</sup> See Enrico Berlinguer's various essays, *Per un governo*; *La politica internazionale*; *Austerità*; and *La crisi italiana*.

<sup>49</sup> Skeptical interpretations have been given for example by Silvio Pons (*Berlinguer*) and Marc Lazar (*Maisons Rouges*). A different interpretation of the impact of Berlinguer's politics in Italy has been given by Francesco Barbagallo, *Enrico Berlinguer*.

<sup>50</sup> See the joint declarations and public statements made by the Italian, French, and Spanish party leaders in 1975–77 in Archivio PCI at the Istituto Gramsci, Fondo Berlinguer, Mov. op. int., 129. "Dichiarazione comune del PCI e del Partito comunista francese," November 15, 1975; Mov. op. int., 146, "Dichiarazione comune del Partito comunista di Spagna, del Partito comunista francese e del Partito comunista italiano," Madrid, March

short-lived. While the Italian and the Spanish communist parties remained coherent with their goals of reaching greater autonomy from Soviet leadership, dismissing the revolutionary strategy and endorsing political pluralism,<sup>51</sup> the French soon abandoned the political experiment of Eurocommunism and realigned with Soviet directives.

The impact of Eurocommunism inside the Soviet Bloc, however, was much stronger. It was perceived as a true challenge to the stability and cohesion of the communist bloc, a thorny ideological dispute, eventually turning into a real political one.

Though narrow in time and scope and probably too ambitious for the time, Eurocommunism managed to raise deep concern in the USSR and among its allies and left a long-lasting perception that Italian Communists, together with the PCE and other left-wing parties in Western Europe, such as the West German SPD, were working hard to delegitimize Soviet ideological and political leadership. These worries extended even later on into the 1980s, when Berlinguer's claims for the right to follow "national ways to Socialism" had almost been forgotten in Western Europe, under pressure of the rearmament/disarmament public debate.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, while Eurocommunism was one of the outcomes of international détente, it ironically contributed to raising hostility between Eastern and Western communists.

Two aspects of this question should be pointed out here: the PCI's theoretical challenge and the political one, which was mostly revealed in 1979–81, a period that proved to be a turning point in the PCI's relations with its sister parties.

With regard to the ideological challenge, what threatened to divide the PCI from its East European allies was neither its call for the right to follow a national path to Socialism, nor the idea of an alliance with a pro-Atlanticist center-left coalition, nor, finally, the PCI's agreement with the DC for a government of "national solidarity" reached in 1976. According to a political

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3, 1977. On the PCI's and PCF's European policy, see Enrico Berlinguer and George Marchais' joint statement in Rome, "L'Unità," December 18, 1978.

<sup>51</sup> In Arch. PCI, Istituto Gramsci, Fondo Berlinguer, Mov. op. int., 140, see, for example, "Berlinguer's speech at the Conference of the European Communist and Workers Parties in Berlin," June 29–30, 1976.

<sup>52</sup> The East German SED records include a number of analyses stressing the continuity of the PCI's and PCE's Eurocommunist strategies. For example, BA, SAPMO, DY 30, J IV 2/ 20/ 102, "Information für das PB. Betrifft: Einschätzung der Dokumentenentwürfe für den X Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Spaniens," July 14, 1981; BA, SAPMO, IV 2/ 2.035/ 2, "Arbeitsgruppe 'X Parteitag Internationale Fragen' unter Leitung von H. Axen," late 1980.

analysis of the East German Ministry for State Security, based among the other things on the opinion of “leading West German government circles,” the PCI was the only Eurocommunist party having elaborated sound theoretic arguments. In this perspective, the historic compromise was considered as a natural consequence of the ideological and political revisions made by the PCI over time, rather than as a break with ideological orthodoxy.<sup>53</sup>

A political argument, instead, divided Eastern and Western communists. The PCI’s public disapproval of the countries of the Soviet Bloc for their repression of political liberties and neglect of human rights became a threat to the credibility of the Soviet Union and of the other socialist countries, aggravated by the fact that a lively debate inside the PCI Directorate suggested that the USSR was experiencing the structural limits of its model of communism. In 1976 Antonio Tatò, Berlinguer’s political adviser, wrote to him that: “The Soviet Union on its own (and all the socialist countries on their own) will never be able to overcome their current limits in granting and fulfilling democratic liberties.”<sup>54</sup>

Yet, until 1979 the Eastern bloc’s response to Eurocommunism was overall diplomatic and cautious. Between 1975 and 1977, when this new word invented by the press came to the fore, almost no one inside the Soviet Bloc adopted it to define what were considered as mere “deviations” of single political parties. The very existence of a new political phenomenon in Western Europe was silently denied—not because its potential was underestimated, but for an opposite reason—and the option of an open censure against the Eurocommunists was tabled. As a counter-strategy, relations between East European communists and the Italians were improved, while at the same time the PCI’s internal political course was tolerated, sometimes even praised as a “creative” solution to the danger of a right-wing reaction in Italy and as way to release domestic tensions.<sup>55</sup> The overall strategy was to let Eurocommunism fade away alone, without any formal condemnation.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> BStU, MfS, HA IX, Nr. 18183, Broad analysis of Eurocommunism, inside party material based on different sources, including Berlinguer’s public statements, Pelikan’s articles, reports of the CPs Berlin Conference of June 1976. Here many different aspects of Eurocommunism are analyzed: theoretic roots; political roots; the ideological challenge raised by Eurocommunism; its political implications (n.s., but likely early 1977).

<sup>54</sup> Berlinguer, *Note e appunti riservati*, 47.

<sup>55</sup> BA, SAPMO DY 30/ IV B2/ 20/ 61, Information nr. 23/1979, Annex 2: “H. Axen’s talks with Giancarlo Pajetta on February 7, 1979” (February 13, 1979).

<sup>56</sup> See Pons, *Berlinguer*, 112–13; Fasanaro, “Eurocommunism” (for documentary references see footnotes 30 and 31).

By 1979 the Communist parties of the Soviet Bloc had accepted the PCI's, as well as every Communist Party's right to circumscribed ideological revisions (explicitly recognized, for example, by Boris Ponomarev at the Sofia Conference of the international Communist movement in December 1978).<sup>57</sup> Yet, the potential of Eurocommunism in Eastern Europe was looked at with great attention, due also to such gloomy information as the one reported by the MfS after West German sources: "It can be expected that the chances of the Soviet Union to exercise its own influence upon Eurocommunism will be reduced and that, instead, the latter will give its own considerable contribution to the 'liberalization' of socialist countries."<sup>58</sup>

In the wake of the neutron bomb affair and after NATO's dual-track decision, moreover, the problem of security and the perception of an enhanced military threat from the West became the focus of the Warsaw Pact domestic debate. Accordingly, the room of maneuver of each Communist party in the East, as well as in the West narrowed.

The Soviet Union multiplied its efforts to involve a wide range of political parties and social movements active in Western Europe in its pacifist campaign, led under an "anti-imperialistic" label. In the face of what was perceived as a new kind of menace to its security, Moscow reaffirmed its leadership of an ideologically oriented anti-war movement and desperately demanded the PCI's support, not only to oppose the Atlantic Council's decision of December 1979, but also to prevent its effective implementation.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> The Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (AAN), LXXVI-11, Polish Report of the International Theoretical Conference "The Building of Socialism and Communism in the Process of Global Development," Sofia, December 12-15, 1978, and Warsaw, January 10, 1979. The author thanks Prof. Oliver Bange for allowing her access to his private archive including the AAN records quoted in this chapter.

<sup>58</sup> BStU, MfS, HVA, Nr. 76, "Auskunft über die Politik und innerparteiliche Situation der italienischen kommunistischen Partei (IKP) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung gegnerischer Wertungen und Aktivitäten," March 16, 1979.

<sup>59</sup> BA, SAPMO, Büro Axen, IV 2/ 2.035/ 23, "Rede H. Axen . . . auf der Konferenz der Sekretäre für ideologische und internationale Fragen . . . in Berlin," July 3-5, 1979; BA, SAPMO, Büro Axen, IV 2/ 2.035/ 71, Axen to Honecker. "Das ZK der KPdSU hat sich mit einem Schreiben an die kommunistischen und Arbeiterparteien Westeuropas gewandt. . .," October 9, 1979; same folder, "Text eines Briefes des ZK der KPdSU an sozialdemokratische Parteiführungen," May 29, 1981. See also, BA, SAPMO, Büro Axen, IV 2/ 2.035/ 68, "Report of a conversation between J.W. Andropov and G. Marchais on July 12, 1983" (date of the report July 25, 1983); BA, SAPMO, Büro Axen, IV 2/ 2.035/ 101, "Letter from the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Secretary general of the SED forwarding a letter of the CC of the CPSU to the PCI," February 16, 1983.

The solidarity of Italian communists and their active participation in the organization of this campaign were expected in Eastern Europe, also because Italy was one of those countries entitled to deploy NATO's intermediate-range nuclear weapons on its territory. In February 1983 the CPSU addressed Italian communists with the following words: "History teaches that in front of a strong and common imperialist enemy it is important to unite all peaceful forces, even when there are different opinions, and prevent them to be weakened by internal controversies."<sup>60</sup>

The PCI responded to Soviet appeals by taking a position that eventually marked a watershed in its relations with Moscow. On the one hand, it opposed both the dual-track decision and all following steps taken by the Italian government to ensure the effectiveness of NATO's resolution. On the other hand, it accused the Soviet Union of being responsible, together with the United States, for the opening of a new phase of East-West tensions.

The Italian party's leadership then blamed Moscow for both the deployment of SS-20 and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, thereby suggesting a double political de-legitimization: first, they undermined the legitimacy of Soviet foreign policy and second, they denied Moscow's authority to lead the pacifist movement.

The record of the June 1980 meeting between Berlinguer and Axen in Rome is an outstanding example of this awkward atmosphere. Their talks show that on such crucial political matters the two sides held opposite perspectives. Contrary to the past, the SED seemed to desert its traditional role of mediator between the PCI and the CPSU, due probably to the fact that the gap between the two had become too wide.

Berlinguer argued that fear of a nuclear war had grown in Western Europe after the Soviets installed SS-20 and West European public opinion was now more and more concerned with the worsening of the international situation after the Afghanistan occupation, for which the secretary of the PCI did not recognize any legitimate ground.<sup>61</sup>

Even if the political experiment of Eurocommunism was declining, the Spanish Communist Party echoed the PCI and took a similar standpoint,

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<sup>60</sup> BA, SAPMO, Büro Axen, IV 2/ 2.035/ 101, "Letter from the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Secretary general of the SED forwarding a letter of the CC of the CPSU to the PCI," February 16, 1983.

<sup>61</sup> BA, SAPMO, Büro Axen, IV 2/ 2.035/ 102, SED Report on H. Axen's visit to Italy (June 18–20, 1980), "Anlage 10: Vermerk über das Gespräch zwischen dem Generalsekretär der IKP, Enrico Berlinguer und . . . Hermann Axen am 20 Juni 1980 in ZK der IKP."

which gave the impression that a bloc of West European competitive parties still existed.<sup>62</sup>

Interestingly, the Italian communists' stance on the positioning of NATO's nuclear missiles in Western Europe raised contradictory perceptions inside and outside the Soviet Bloc. Juxtaposed with the East European perception that the PCI was defying Soviet leadership, in Italy the PCI's opposition to NATO's rearmament was considered as evidence of the Italian communists' inevitable realignment with the Soviets—in spite of their alleged attempts to take distance from their main ally with Eurocommunist arguments. These opposed views were known in Eastern Europe: in March 1979 the MfS of the GDR received from its Western sources information that in the West the PCI was still held as a supporter of Soviet foreign policy, recognizing the USSR's role in the "fight for détente, peace and the liberation of peoples."<sup>63</sup>

It became clear that the breach opened with the USSR had become irreconcilable when the PCI refused to back the pacifist movement that the Soviets were actively sponsoring and whose West European wings were particularly crucial for their "anti-imperialist" campaign. Criticizing the military operation in Afghanistan they ultimately charged the Soviet Union with the same kind of responsibility as the U.S. for its "nervous expansionism"<sup>64</sup> and for jeopardizing international détente.<sup>65</sup>

The issue of both superpowers' responsibility for the crisis of détente was crucial.<sup>66</sup> It revealed a change of pace in the criticism of the PCI leadership toward the USSR and eventually suggested that the Italian party

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<sup>62</sup> BA, SAPMO, DY 30, J IV 2/ 20/ 102, "Information. Betr.: Plenartagung des Zentralkomitees der Kommunistischen Partei Spaniens vom 2.–3. Februar 1980" (February 26, 1980).

<sup>63</sup> BStU, MfS, HVA, Nr. 76, "Auskunft über die Politik und innerparteiliche Situation der italienischen kommunistischen Partei (IKP) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung gegnerischer Wertungen und Aktivitäten, 16 März 1979."

<sup>64</sup> This expression was actually used before the invasion of Afghanistan at the Belgrade meeting of June 1978 (Archivio PCI at the Fondazione Gramsci, Fondo Berlinguer, Mov. op. int. 157, PCI Note on the Belgrade meeting between A. Grlickov, A. Minucci, and R. Ledda, June 7, 1978).

<sup>65</sup> BA, SAPMO, Büro Axen, IV 2/ 2.035/ 102, SED Report on H. Axen's visit to Italy (June 18–20, 1980), "Anlage 10: Vermerk über das Gespräch zwischen dem Generalsekretär der IKP, Enrico Berlinguer und . . . Hermann Axen am 20 Juni 1980 in ZK der IKP." See also Berlinguer's speech to the Italian Chamber of Deputies, November 16, 1983, in Berlinguer, *Discorsi parlamentari*; Barbagallo, *Enrico Berlinguer*, 406–7.

<sup>66</sup> On this point see also BStU, MfS, HVA n. 2, "Information über einige aktuelle Aspekte der Innen- und Aussenpolitik Italiens."

preferred a position of equidistance from both Moscow and Washington, at least when referring to the crisis of détente. This dispute turned into provocation when Berlinguer made his point of view public in his speech to the European Parliament on January 16, 1980, by observing that operations in Afghanistan were “taking place in an international situation already heavy with tension (in the Persian Gulf, in the Middle East, in Southeast Asia, in various African areas and in East-West relations), eventually causing its further deterioration.”<sup>67</sup>

A few months later, the East German Foreign Ministry, a close observer of Italian politics, noticed the PCI’s reluctance to take any step forward to recover credibility and trust among its allied parties in Eastern Europe, while on the contrary it recognized all efforts made by Italy’s government to rebuild confidence with the Socialist countries and regain bilateral relations.<sup>68</sup>

Assessing “the roots of the aggravation of the international situation” remained “a priority” for the Soviets even later on in 1983, when the CPSU wrote to the Directorate of the PCI denouncing its biased judgment of the international situation and of Soviet responsibilities. The PCI’s draft statement to be presented at the 16th Congress was also attacked by the CPSU in the same letter, since this document made reference to the Soviet Union’s loss of credibility with European public opinion and refused to recognize Soviet initiatives in favor of détente.

More important, however, was Moscow’s perception that the Italian Communists were trying to split the international workers movement for their own political ambitions, by supporting a sort of West European internationalism and isolating the Socialist countries (and workers) of Eastern Europe.<sup>69</sup>

To make the situation worse, in the aftermath of the Polish crisis of December 1981 the Italian Communist Party vehemently condemned the “systemic crisis” of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe.<sup>70</sup> The PCI’s

<sup>67</sup> Berlinguer’s speech to the European Parliament, January 16, 1980, in “L’Unità,” January 17, 1980, [http://archiviostorico.unita.it/cgi-bin/highlightPdf.cgi?t=ebook&file=/archivio/uni\\_1980\\_01/19800117\\_0001.pdf&query=](http://archiviostorico.unita.it/cgi-bin/highlightPdf.cgi?t=ebook&file=/archivio/uni_1980_01/19800117_0001.pdf&query=).

<sup>68</sup> BStU, MfS, HA II, 35672, “MfAA Information Nr. 82/XII vom 15.12.1980. Politik Italiens gegenüber den europäischen sozialistischen Ländern (Quelle Abt.WE).”

<sup>69</sup> BA, SAPMO, Büro Axen, IV 2/ 2.035/ 101, “Letter from the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Secretary General of the SED forwarding a letter of the CC of the CPSU to the PCI,” February 16, 1983.

<sup>70</sup> See the PCI Directorate’s statement of December 29, 1981, in “L’Unità,” December 30, 1981. For a Polish perspective of Italy’s reaction to the crisis, see Pasztor, “Le relazioni.”



statements raised a very negative reaction in the East German Ministry for State Security:

With this document, the PCI Directorate completes its breakup with real Socialism both theoretically, ideologically and politically. The PCI Directorate actually carries out its transition from a position and a political line of "critical distance" and "delimitation" [*Abgrenzung*] toward Socialist countries to a different political line based upon disapproval and interference [in their own affairs].<sup>71</sup>

The breakup, however, was never formalized. Even if within the Eastern bloc the PCI's political shift was considered deep and hostile, the Soviet government and its allies deemed it wise to prevent an official move against the PCI.

At the same time, Berlinguer came to a very different interpretation of the meaning and potential of East-West détente than the one endorsed by the Italian government and by a large number of DC politicians. In 1976 he made the following significant remarks to the Chamber of Deputies:

It is only in the context of the further progress of détente and international cooperation that we consider as realizable the gradual overcoming of opposing military blocs and disarmament. The main reason for our acceptance of the alliances that Italy has made is based upon our conviction that a unilateral breach of these alliances would alter the strategic balance between the two blocs, thereby bringing to an end an essential prerequisite for détente.<sup>72</sup>

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the PCI accepted Italy's membership in NATO as a provisional, but necessary condition to develop East-West relations in a balanced European context. It was considered a matter of realism to accept that at that time there were objective limits to Italy's political autonomy in its foreign and security policy.

But Berlinguer's political vision went beyond the existing political and military alliances: détente was held as an *evolutionary* concept that would lead to the breakdown of both the Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact. As opposed to not only most of Italy's ruling class, but also to the Soviet Union's conception of détente, the Secretary General of the PCI looked at it as a dynamic process<sup>73</sup> in which any move made to preserve the existing

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<sup>71</sup> BStU, MfS, HA II, N. 40497, "Information zum Grundsatzdokument der Nationalen Leitung der Italienischen Kommunistischen Partei vom 29.12.1981."

<sup>72</sup> Enrico Berlinguer's speech at the Italian Chamber of Deputies, February 20, 1976, in *Discorsi parlamentari*, 144–45.

<sup>73</sup> Pons, *Berlinguer*, 75, 92, 110. On the superpowers' static conception of détente, or a mechanism for domestic fortification against political and social change threatened by

balance of power helped Eastern and Western European governments to strengthen, in the short term, those political conditions that would nevertheless lead to the end of the bipolar system in the future.

Détente was constantly recalled as a necessary political vehicle for transition, which was to be carried out beyond ideological constraints in order to realize radical domestic social and economic changes and a transformation of international relations into a multipolar system.

While the superiority of socialist values was not questioned, the superiority of one of the two military pacts over the other was seen as a threat to peace and security in Europe, as well as in those areas of the world where the two superpowers had extended their influence.

Rather than being considered as the defeat of communism, the dissolution of both alliances was viewed as a likely result of history laying the groundwork for a new conception of security:<sup>74</sup> the progress of socialism and the supremacy of the Warsaw Pact over NATO were no longer intertwined; they were now two separate goals.

The secretary general of the PCI developed an increasingly nonaligned perspective on international relations which included his trust in the goal of a united Europe. Accordingly, once the PCI abandoned its long-lasting anti-European stance, it turned into the most convinced supporter of a democratization of the EC, focused on the role of the European Parliament.

Berlinguer's vision was influenced by both his political pragmatism and his well-known idealism: on the one hand, he pushed the leadership of his party to accept Italy's membership of NATO as a fact that would only possibly be changed after a broader change in the international system; on the other hand, he believed that these changes would occur as long as détente progressed not only with bilateral agreements between the superpowers, but also with the activity of other international actors, such as the European Community, the UN, and the nonaligned front.<sup>75</sup>

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protest movements and political parties in the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Suri, *Power and Protest*.

<sup>74</sup> Berlinguer's interview with Carlo Casalegno for *Europa*, February 3, 1976, in *La politica internazionale*, 104.

<sup>75</sup> See, for example, Berlinguer's speech delivered to the EP, November 19, 1980, in Archivio PCI, Fondo Berlinguer, PE n.4; Interview with Luciano Barca, *Rinascita*, n. 47, November 28, 1980.

## Conclusion

From the early phase of peaceful coexistence to Gorbachev's coming of power and the beginning of nuclear disarmament, *détente* meant many different things for Italy: an opportunity to export Italian products, enter new markets and favor industrial growth; a way to promote Italy's political interests abroad and improve its prestige at multilateral meetings; an exercise of diplomatic mediating skills; a key (not always the right one) to open the door of superpowers' politics; a lever to ensure domestic consensus for the Christian Democracy; an alternative scenario to the economic and financial crisis of the 1970s; a flag for change in the hands of the Communist Party, looking for its national identity and a new European role without losing its communist roots; true inspiration for political thinking in some cases, mere propaganda in others; a tool to appease social unrest in a country where the first generation born after the war was impatient to find new ideals beyond Cold War constraints and Western/Eastern allegiances.

Two alternate visions of East-West *détente* have been analyzed in this chapter. These visions coexisted politically in Italy and mirrored ideological conflicts in Europe. The first one aimed to stabilize and protect the existing balance of power between the superpowers and their respective allies. This conception was widespread inside the Christian Democracy and, with some differences that have not been examined in this paper, within the Socialist Party as well. Under the umbrella of a sound relationship with the United States, Italian governments and business developed an early bilateral economic and trade *détente* with the Soviet Union at first and other Central and East European countries later. This flow of exchanges developed through the years of the "great *détente*," encouraged by the CSCE process, and was recovered by the center-left governments of the 1980s after a brief slowing down at the very beginning of that decade. Politically, Italy's *détente* policies matured in parallel with West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, the setting of a multilateral framework to deal with European security issues and the beginning of European political cooperation. *Détente* is a keyword and a constant in Italy's foreign policy records: its enormous potential as a transformation process was not underestimated, but in general the DC governments and the center-left maintained a balanced and conservative view of *détente*, aiming to reach two traditional goals: improving Italy's international prestige while keeping strong Atlantic ties. In this perspective, Italy's *Ostpolitik* initiatives aimed to the maintenance of a long-lasting European balance where the recognition of the GDR was welcomed as an additional element of stabilization.

The Italian Communist Party presented an alternate vision of *détente*. Until the Czech crisis of 1968 the PCI had played a special role inside the international Communist movement: it was impatient to obtain recognition of its own independence from Moscow, but remained essentially aligned to the Soviet model of Communism and Soviet foreign policy. Thereafter, the principles that had inspired the Czech revolt fostered a lively ideological debate within the party, focusing on the need to ensure the respect of political liberties in the allied countries of the Soviet Bloc. Furthermore, the “great *détente*” favored the PCI’s electoral rise in Italy and opened the path to a government agreement with the Christian Democracy. The economic and financial crisis of the 1970s marked the end of the PCI’s thirty years of domestic isolation.

Transformation applied to the different dimensions of the PCI’s *détente* policies: transformation in Italy, where austerity measures should be coupled with a severe moral reform of Italian politics; the evolution of socialist models and their coming into line with the reality of different national situations; a change inside the communist movement, where the Soviet Union was urged to recognize its mistakes and reform itself; transformation in Europe, where at least part of the West European communist parties finally endorsed European integration and contributed to the making of a new European electoral basis; the transition from the existing conception of international security to a different one, based on the overcoming of both military alliances.

# Perception of the Other: “Kremlinologists” and “Westerners”

## East and West German Analysts and Their Mutual Perceptions, 1977–1985

*Sabine Loewe-Hannatzsch*

The perceptions held by East and West German foreign policy experts of political research institutions regarding their respective counterparts underwent significant changes beginning in the early 1970s and lasting until 1990, especially from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. The focus shifted from dissociation from contacts from the other side to well-structured trans-bloc contacts. After becoming chancellor of West Germany in October 1969, Willy Brandt pursued a new policy (*Neue Ostpolitik*) towards the states in Central and Eastern Europe. The *Neue Ostpolitik* forged new and much more intense contacts between East Berlin and Bonn, resulting in a more precise and more humane picture of the other side. Eventually, the Helsinki Final Act of August 1975 brought about international recognition of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) as a legitimate second German state. In the wake of the so-called Basic Treaty (*Grundlagenvertrag*) between the two German states and the visual recognition of the GDR as an international player during the CSCE conference, East Berlin was able to forge contacts on numerous levels, including—besides central issues of East-West diplomacy—economic and military relations, as well as cultural, societal, and institutional contacts. The formation of a new image of the other side correlated with a change of perceptions which also applied to the four major political research institutions in East and West Germany: the Institute for International Politics and Economics (IPW),<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Institut für Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft. The institute was founded in 1971 and was located in East Berlin, GDR. For a detailed description of its foundation and the first years, see Klein, “Das Institut für Internationale Politik.” For information about the development of the institute, see Scala, *Understanding the Class Enemy*.

Institute for International Relations (IIB),<sup>2</sup> Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP),<sup>3</sup> which is the legal entity of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, and the Federal Institute for East European and International Studies (BIOst).<sup>4</sup>

Before its international recognition the GDR's international relations were largely limited to the member states of the Warsaw Pact and other states with communist and Marxist leanings. Still, by the late 1970s, new possibilities for meetings and contacts on the institutional level led to a shift in perceptions about their counterpart. This resulted in a gradual breaking away from the established dogmatic class and ideology-based approach in East Berlin's foreign policy, leading to much more realistic assessments of international politics.

Equally, the desire for more insightful information about the East and the West and the resulting necessity for gathering and processing this information gave cause for the foundation of political research institutions. These semiofficial<sup>5</sup> research institutes therefore focused on foreign policy and security-related issues. The assessment of international processes, the analysis of theoretical aspects of the other societal system and the provision of political insight to their respective governments remained the foci of these institutes. Yet—in the East and the West alike—they also played a prominent role in the public discourse, or even outright propaganda, about the other side and presented in many ways the interests of their state

<sup>2</sup> Institut für Internationale Beziehungen. The institute was founded in 1949 and located in Potsdam-Babelsberg, GDR. For more information about the structure, foundation and organization of the institute, see Crome, *Die Babelsberger Diplomatschule*.

<sup>3</sup> Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. The institute was founded in 1962 and was located in Ebenhausen, FRG. The SWP is the founding institution behind the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. The SWP and the institute differ only in legal terms. Further, the chairman of the SWP council is also the director of the Institute. For a detailed description of the history of the institute and its adjustments according to the West German government, see Zunker, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)*.

<sup>4</sup> Bundesinstitut für osteuropäische und internationale Studien. The institute was founded in 1961, but received its final name in 1966 and was located in Cologne, FRG. The institute had a central role in West Germany's research on Eastern Europe and it analysed the political praxis in the communist regimes, including information on political, economic, societal, and ideological relations in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states relevant to the present day.

<sup>5</sup> The SWP and the BIOst were both semi-official institutes that provided research for the government. Although the SWP was a private foundation with its own agenda it was closely tied to the government for economic safety and to have access to confidential material. The BIOst did a great amount of research for numerous federal ministries according to their needs. See Zunker, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)*, 26, 35, 247.

or government to a wider public. The premise on which these institutions worked depended on the ministry to which they were assigned. Furthermore, in the GDR, the experts also had to comply with the political and ideological requirements of the leadership of the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) in producing their analyses on the state of contemporary international relations. These experts became an integral part of the preparation process and eventual implementation of foreign policy but had only limited influence on the actual conduct of foreign policy and decision-making.<sup>6</sup>

### The Institutions and Their Specific Tasks

The foundation of the GDR on October 7, 1949, required the creation of an institution for the training and education of foreign policy experts, who would both analyze international politics and represent the foreign policy of their state. The training of an entire new class of foreign policy experts became necessary because—according to the doctrine of anti-fascism—former party members of the National Socialists were not permitted to represent the GDR. This was to be the task of the newly founded institute. However it was not until 1964 that the Institute for International Relations became an independent institution. Although it was directly aligned with the East German government (the *Ministerrat*), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MfAA) was in charge of research programs and selected both the contents taught and the personnel required to do so. Additionally, the Central Committee of the SED and the party's department for international relations controlled the political and ideological direction. The institute produced almost the entire output of foreign policy assessments forwarded to the MfAA and the Central Committee for their own decision-making, as well as to the Ministry for State Security, Stasi (MfS).

While the IIB was educating diplomats and producing analyses on international relations and daily political events, the IPW became East Germany's leading research institute on the capitalist West, especially regarding the domestic developments in West Germany and relations between Bonn and East Berlin. Working closely with the Politburo and the MfS, it

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<sup>6</sup> A complex history of West German research on East Germany has been provided by Jens Hüttmann. He presents in detail a number of West German institutions and personalities that did research about the GDR, but excluding the SWP and the BIOst, see Hüttman, *DDR-Geschichte und ihre Forscher*.

not only represented the GDR in its ideological and propagandistic way, but also focused on analyzing West German politics. The high degree of integration of both institutions into the communist system and its party machinery limited the possibilities for independent research and realistic assessments. The SED politics and ideology highly influenced academic thinking structures. The analytical work of the institutes had to justify, impart, and represent the foreign policy developed and defined in the party's central committee machinery. Not only did academic research, specialist knowledge, and subordination under the existing system result in repeated conflicts of interests and analytical results, but the resulting strains to re-adjust new party-political considerations required compromises and a shift of priorities. Although the increase of contacts in the West and cooperation with similar institutes across the blocs led to a change in academic research and methods, the centrality of Marxist-Leninist ideology was never abandoned completely. However, beginning in the 1980s, the political and ideological postulates provided by the ruling SED-leadership became increasingly incompatible with the reality of international relations.

The West German counterparts of the East German institutions, the BIOst and the SWP, were just as well integrated into the government machinery of the Federal Republic as the institutes in East Germany. In 1961, Chancellor Adenauer initiated the foundation of an institute concentrating on the assessment of political, economic, societal, and cultural developments in the East. The institution received its final name "Federal Institute for Eastern European and International Studies" in 1966 and from then on it was subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior producing analysis for each department of the government. The SWP was founded in 1962 by an initiative of political and foreign policy analysts, but quickly became financed by the federal government in Bonn. Shifts in world and domestic politics forced the SWP to undergo numerous adjustments and changes over the years.

All four institutions worked for their respective contemporary governments and were subordinated to ministries, which in turn tried to influence the institutes, their personnel, their research foci and analyses depending on their own interests. Shifts in world politics and the beginning of the era of détente caused changes in the institutes' premises. On the one hand, the institutes were subject to political ideology and state interest; on the other hand, their analyses and assessments affected decisions made at the highest political level.



### **Contacts between East and West German Institutions in the Early 1970s**

Long before the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975, Willy Brandt had already established a policy based on communication and contacts, aimed at the transformation of communist rule in Eastern Europe. This meant first recognizing existing realities, in order to work toward overcoming them. This dialectic was central not only to Brandt's Ostpolitik, but to all Western concepts of détente. The focus was set on soft power, causing a gradual intellectual reorientation, the multilateralization of contacts on all levels.<sup>7</sup> Representative relations between foreign policy research institutions had been established almost always right after their establishment. Bonn's new Ostpolitik and the CSCE process intensified the communication, but while the Soviet-American relationship was cooling down at the end of the 1970s, contacts between political research institutions expanded enormously because of common security and economic interests.

In the beginning contacts met during international meetings, seminars, and conferences, such as the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London, the International Institute for Peace (IIP) in Vienna, and the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH) in Hamburg.<sup>8</sup> From the late 1970s on meetings became more individualized and in turn personality-dependent. As time passed the extent of communication and interaction between experts became more dependent on their character, values, and attitudes. Fruitful interaction depended on both the personality of the East German and the West German experts. Nevertheless, dialogue among numerous and diverse partners remained focused throughout on security and economic issues in Europe. The circle of academics in these institutes was limited either to the heads of the institution or to researchers in high positions—such as the SWP and at

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<sup>7</sup> In his "change through rapprochement" speech on July 15, 1963, at the Evangelical Academy in Tutzing, Egon Bahr emphasised Germany's special role in overcoming the entrenched East-West conflict in Europe. For the security dimension of Brandt's and Bahr's strategic blueprint, see Bange, "An Intricate Web."

<sup>8</sup> The IISS was founded in 1958, concentrating on problems posed by nuclear weapons in the modern world. In the 1960s and 1970s, the IISS made a major contribution to the elaboration of concepts of nuclear deterrence and arms control in the nuclear age. Since its foundation representatives from both German states regularly attended its meetings and conferences. The IIP was founded in 1956. The IFSH was founded in 1971.

the Federal Institute for Eastern European and International Studies—or convinced party members of the SED with an analytical capability who were part of a privileged group labeled *Reisekader*.<sup>9</sup> Although the political researchers were influenced by the ideological premises of their respective institutes, each researcher pursued his/her own approach, based on personal motives, experiences and values. Each academic had his/her own way to interpret and analyze political happenings and dialogue with political experts from the capitalist West and the socialist East based on similar research interests. Contacts often shifted from official to unofficial ones. The meetings of political experts from antagonistic societal systems allowed not only the transfer of information, know-how, and methods, but also presented a possibility to transfer values, attitudes and knowledge. This in turn led to a broadening of perspectives and the slow dissolution of prejudices and resentments.

### **The Extension of Institutional Contacts between 1977 and 1980**

In November 1977, at an East-West meeting of the IISS in London, representatives of foreign policy institutions of both socialist and liberal states in Europe without American and Soviet representatives, discussed how much “progress détente would make in Europe without the two superpowers in case of a worsening of the Soviet-American relationship.”<sup>10</sup> Despite their social, political, military, and economic differences all European states at this meeting had the same interest: to continue East-West détente, and especially extend it into the military sphere. The dominating view that “measures of arms reduction on a strategic and conventional level were necessary in order to make détente work, was clearly understood as the main focus on which eastern and West European states had to concentrate.”<sup>11</sup> This meeting was only one of a series of mutual discussions about foreign and security policies.

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<sup>9</sup> *Reisekader* (traveling cadre) was a selected group of people, mostly members of the state and party apparatus, but also managers, journalists, and academics, who were allowed to travel to the West. The Ministry of State Security, Hauptabteilung XIX, verified and approved the *Reisekader*.

<sup>10</sup> See Archive of the University of Potsdam (henceforth AUP), ASR 13385, for the report of the meeting of the IISS in London from November 18–20, 1977, by Professor Kleitke, member of the IIB, from November 28, 1977.

<sup>11</sup> AUP, ASR 13385, 2.

At the same time, Max Schmidt,<sup>12</sup> director of the IPW, was also visiting relevant institutes and personalities in West Germany. Permitted to travel to nonsocialist countries, he visited the FRG several times a year. These trips developed and strengthened Schmidt's roster of contacts, improved his understanding of political and economic developments in Bonn, and furthered the analytical activities of the IPW. With the overall intensification of contacts and relationships between the East and West resulting from the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, Schmidt (as one of the GDR's leading analysts of foreign and security policies) began to interact frequently with experts from West Germany. These exchanges covered the entire spectrum of political topics, military issues, as well as economic questions.<sup>13</sup> Besides Schmidt, a great number of high-ranking researchers from various academic fields participated in this new atmosphere of cooperation and communication. This rather special East-West interaction showed remarkable variety regarding the level at which the talks were conducted, the approaches considered and the formats in which they took place.

West German institutes also favored bilateral cooperation between the FRG and the GDR. Their approach was aimed at "expanding cooperation between social scientists by providing a basis to achieve consensus over disputed topics."<sup>14</sup> The same report by the BIOst even suggested "using the interest of East European scientists on discussions and free exchange of opinion."<sup>15</sup> The BIOst experts focused on the advisory role of their East German colleagues within the SE leadership. The BIOst paper therefore advocated an exchange of information which would provide the East German academics with new arguments. This, the experts in Cologne thought, might indirectly influence the political decision-making process

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<sup>12</sup> Max Schmidt, an expert on security issues and peace studies with a strong political-ideological loyalty to the SED, was the director of the IPW from 1973 up until its dissolution in 1990. Dealing with strategic and tactical questions, Schmidt undertook multiple research trips to the FRG (at least annually from 1973) building up contacts as well as trying to establish an exchange on new security concepts.

<sup>13</sup> Bundesarchiv—Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR (henceforth BA-SAPMO) DY 30-IV 2/2.036-86. For example, on a research trip in February 1979, Schmidt met with Dr. Rüdiger Altmann, Dr. Bräutigam, Dr. Wolfgang Bergsdorf; in November 1980 he met with former general Wolf Graf von Baudissin, as well as met with the directors of almost all leading foreign policy research institutions in the FRG, including Christian Ludz, Heinrich Vogel, Klaus Ritter, and Egon Bahr.

<sup>14</sup> Bundesarchiv Koblenz (henceforth BAK), B 395 (Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien)-22; paper on preparing the scientific panel of the BIOst, December 6, 1978, 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

in the GDR.<sup>16</sup> Between 1977 and 1980 the trans-bloc communication between East and West German experts on international relations and between their institutions greatly intensified: they shifted from being rare, superficial and impersonal in nature to frequent, academic, and personalized. Analysts from both sides continually gained valuable information from one another, and the dialogue with numerous and diverse partners led to an increasing convergence of assessments about international questions, if not an outright convergence of views.

The combination of firsthand experience in the West and constant exposure to Western ideas proved to have a profound impact on the selected group of East German foreign policy experts.<sup>17</sup> The ongoing process of détente—and especially Eastern attempts to instigate an East-West military détente in the late 1970s and early 1980s—provided this group with more intellectual autonomy to conduct research and critical reconsideration. This in turn resulted in a slow but persistent alienation from the dogmatic Marxist-Leninist understanding of international relations and politics.<sup>18</sup> Growing tensions between intellectual autonomy and political subordination became ever more pronounced.<sup>19</sup>

However, West German experts also began to critically reassess their prevailing understanding of Eastern Europe. They initiated more and more meetings with contacts and visits to East German institutes. Whenever Max Schmidt traveled to institutions and personalities in the FRG, almost all of his dialogue partners—scientists, political, and economic representatives—requested a visit, a presentation or a research trip to East Germany. During his visit to Bonn in November 1977, Rüdiger Altmann asked him for a private visit to the IPW for research purposes. Professor Hanns-Dieter Jacobsen, then a research fellow at the BIOst, explained his idea for a presentation at the IPW in May 1978. In response he invited the IPW

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 3–4.

<sup>17</sup> Among those enjoying the privilege of travelling to nonsocialist countries were the directors of the institutes and a selected group of high-ranking researchers of the IIB and the IPW, such as André Brie, Klaus Benjowski, and Wolfgang Kubiczek.

<sup>18</sup> In order to produce analytical output adjusted to the practical needs of the party, East German academics continuously had to carry out a balancing act of combining scientific analysis with ideological faithfulness. Although the ongoing tension between ideological dogma and the reality of international relations allowed for more and more critical assessment and reality-based analysis, Marxism-Leninism provided the framing for academic work throughout the period under consideration.

<sup>19</sup> For an overview on the construction, function and output of foreign policy expertise in the GDR, as well as its subordination to practical needs and political-ideological requirements of the SED, see Scala, *Understanding the Class Enemy*.

scholars to a symposium at the BIOst the following year.<sup>20</sup> These are just a few examples of a comprehensive process of mutual give and take, of visits and counter-visits, including institutional connections between almost all East and West German foreign policy institutes. Through the close and constant correspondence between the heads of the institutes—Max Schmidt (IPW), Stefan Doernberg (IIB), Klaus Ritter (SWP), Heinrich Vogel (BIOst)—it was possible to quickly organize scholarly conferences, panels and visits mostly concerning the fast-changing situation in Europe.<sup>21</sup> The deepening and extending of contacts across borders and systems contributed to a broadening of perspectives that led to a much improved understanding of each other and finally established a more accurate and refined picture of the other side.

However, the multiple contacts and interactions between the experts and these institutions were not without conflict, problems, and differences of approaches and interests, especially concerning ideological and military concepts. The priority for both East and West German analysts was to represent and defend their societal system and its ideology. Both sides accused each other of being responsible for the new arms race in Europe at the end of the 1970s. West German experts criticized the military activities of the Soviet Union and the WTO for developing a dangerous military advantage in Europe resulting in the slowdown of détente. In return, East German analysts saw the “growing danger of an outbreak of a nuclear war as the result of the confrontational politics of the most aggressive groups of the NATO states.”<sup>22</sup> Two high-ranking analysts of the IIB described the ambiguous attitude of West German experts toward the socialist states: “On the one hand they [West German analysts] referred to the necessity of stabilizing the political, economic and social situation, as a requirement to continue the process of détente. On the other hand they clearly attempted to continue to split and undermine the socialist states.”<sup>23</sup> However, while a number of differences in

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<sup>20</sup> See BA-SAPMO: DY 30-IV B2/2.028-34, 20-2, for Schmidt’s report of a research trip to the FRG, November 20–30, 1977, by Max Schmidt.

<sup>21</sup> See Bundesarchiv Berlin (henceforth BAB) DC 204 (International Institute for Politics and Economics files)-37, for the process of permanent correspondence between the institutes—invitations, visiting requests, and exchange of material.

<sup>22</sup> AUP, ASR 13135, “Preparatory paper for a meeting on needs and problems of military détente and arms reduction in Europe by Prof. Dankert and Prof. Müller in October 1982.”

<sup>23</sup> AUP, ASR 13382, “Report on the East-West Seminar of the IISS by Prof. Ersil and Prof. Klein on 7 December 1978.”

interests and approaches<sup>24</sup> between the institutions and experts emerged, they never dominated the meetings and contacts, because the central issue of security and the continuation of détente held the highest priority on both sides.

In a document that summarized the results of a meeting on European security held by the standing commission of research institutes of the socialist states, the heads of the IPW and the IIB stated that “independently on how the different negotiations on the political détente and international cooperation develop, and independently of the process of negotiations on global and non-European aspects of disarmament, the main demand on the agenda still remains the reduction of the level of military confrontation in Europe.”<sup>25</sup> Further, Stefan Doernberg again suggested that “the maintaining and the extension of the bilateral and multilateral agreements on the subject of military détente, arms limitation and arms reduction, which had been established since the beginning of the 1960s, would substantially limit the danger of a nuclear war in Europe.”<sup>26</sup> Only a month later, Heinrich Vogel, head of the BIOst, appealed to all European states that “the current complicated situation, but especially the limited capacity to overcome national and international economic problems on all sides, indeed contains starting points for the continuation of joint efforts on the revival of the process of détente.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> For example the FRG accused the Soviet Union and the WTO member states for its arms race and the extension of the East-West conflict to the third world. Further it tried to push socialist states to a seriously needed orientation to the world market, even if it was not compatible with the socialist economic system. On the other side, the GDR accused the United States and NATO to have initiated a new arms race, to try to split and destabilize the socialist states, and to use the Afghanistan conflict to enforce political demands—first, the withdrawal from Afghanistan, then the continuation of the East-West relations.

<sup>25</sup> BA-SAPMO, DY 30-IV B2/2.028-34, 189, “Report on the possibilities of progress on the level of military détente in Europe by Stefan Doernberg and Max Schmidt on March 1978.”

<sup>26</sup> AUP, ASR 13158, “Information of an internal working conference by Stefan Doernberg on November 1982.”

<sup>27</sup> Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, BStU, MfS, HA XVIII Nr. 21859, “Contribution to the discussion of the international symposium of the IPW by Heinrich Vogel in March 1983.”

### The Tenor of Personal and Institutional Relations in the Early 1980s

While in 1979 the multilateral diplomacy of *détente* began to slow down rapidly, European states and especially West and East Germany intensified their cooperation in order to extend their economic relations and the cooperation based on security-related issues. Mutual visits between East and West German institutions no longer aimed at the mere extension of contacts, but were increasingly understood as a semi-official and yet institutionalized framework for presenting and explaining policy positions to each other and for exchanging opinions on a wide variety of issues.

At this moment, when the deterioration of superpower-relations appeared to jeopardize the stabilization of the East-West conflict in Europe obtained by the era of *détente* in the early 1970s, both German governments were immensely concerned with maintaining a constructive dialogue about security issues.<sup>28</sup> The ongoing dialogue between Bonn and East Berlin—both at the official governmental and expert level—resulted in a (perhaps not entirely surprising) similarity of views with regard to the possible repercussions of international events on the situation in central Europe. In June 1980, while IPW representatives were visiting the Peace Research Institute in Hamburg, all participants agreed that the “situation in Afghanistan . . . should not contribute to a worsening of the situation in Europe or to drawing Europe into military actions in one way or another.”<sup>29</sup> While the U.S. administration began to reinterpret the entire texture of East-West relations in light of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and a possible second intervention in Poland, experts from both East and West German foreign policy institutions agreed that “East-West relations need to continue, even without reaching recognizable changes in the Afghanistan question.”<sup>30</sup>

Other West European states also kept a certain distance from the United States in terms of their economic relations with the member-states of the Warsaw Pact. Their goal was to improve East-West economic relations as this appeared to lessen the increasingly confrontational behavior between the blocs. This could also provide opportunities to enhance German-German economic relations—thereby opening up new opportunities

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<sup>28</sup> BA-SAPMO, DY 30-IV 2/2.036-86, 17-21, “Report on an information-trip to the FRG from 15 to 24 January 1979.”

<sup>29</sup> BA-SAPMO, DY 30-IV 2/2.036-86, 61, “Report of a trip to Hamburg from 13 to 19 June 1980.”

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

for influencing and possibly ameliorating or even changing communist rule in the GDR and beyond. Besides security-related issues, economic relations between Bonn and East Berlin therefore became another significant issue between institutional contacts. In 1979 on another information trip to the FRG, Max Schmidt was told by Rüdiger Altmann that “an extension of trans-bloc economic relations in the 1980s would not be possible without new forms and structures of East-West-cooperation. More cooperation between the industry and services, including joint ventures would limit existing barriers in terms of financing and credits.”<sup>31</sup> During a meeting with representatives of West German economic circles in 1982, the East Germans were informed that West German managers were unwilling to subordinate their interests to American demands.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, in April 1983, during a symposium on East-West economic relations, those East and West Germans present reassured each other of their respective governments’ intention to further develop constructive ways to overcome political and economic barriers, to establish a mutually advantageous cooperation, and especially to create measures to consolidate trust in the area of international economic relations.<sup>33</sup>

### **Using Established Contacts: Military Détente as a Way Out of the Impasse**

Indeed, at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s numerous events—the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and the NATO Dual-Track Decision in 1979, the change from the Carter to the Reagan administration in 1980, the impositions of martial law in Poland in 1981—led to an interruption of the détente process between the United States and the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, during the 1970s both superpowers had begun to develop and refine new nuclear weapon technologies. Based on the development of new computer technology, the United States and the Soviet Union simultaneously developed an entirely new class of intra-continental missiles: the Pershing II, the SS-20 and the concept of turbo-fan-powered

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<sup>31</sup> BA-SAPMO, DY 30-IV2/2.036-86, “Report on an information trip to the FRG from 15 to 24 January 1979,” 12.

<sup>32</sup> BA-SAPMO, DY 30-IV 2/2.036-86, “Report of discussions on the Institute of German Economy in Cologne from 5 to 7 April 1982,” 197–206.

<sup>33</sup> BAB, DC 204-31, “Report on the international symposium of the Institute for International Politics and Economics and the International Institute for Peace on 24/25 March 1983 in Berlin.”



cruise missiles. These new weapons quickly gained enormous political and military importance, because the stationing of them brought about a new image of war in Europe. The long established idea of a decisive battle in Central Europe decided by a "second wave" of Warsaw Pact tank divisions was now called into question by a new generation of weapon systems including bombers with enhanced reach, aircrafts, tanks, and antitank devices.<sup>34</sup> As a result of the longer range, shorter advance warning and higher accuracy of the new weapons, the battlefield would prospectively extend from Central Europe to the entire European continent, from the Atlantic up to Moscow. Consequently, a completely new image of war was established and military capabilities were developing much faster than political decision-making could take place.

Knowing that the territories of the FRG and the GDR would be destroyed in any war scenario, ideas for a trans-bloc security system emerged in both states. As a result of the cooling of Soviet-American relations, the room to maneuver in inner-German relations had severely narrowed. On the one hand, both states had to be loyal to their alliances and leaders; on the other, both were willing to maintain détente and their bilateral relations. On both sides one way out was to shift official bilateral exchanges to unofficial contacts; and on an institutional level, to instrumentalize the contacts between the institutes for political research that had been established in the previous years. By the end of the 1970s, the meetings between the institutes and their intellectuals were dominated by security issues, new weapons and war technology, and the attempt to devise a way out of the contemporary impasse in the international and European situation, thereby avoiding a conflict or even war between the two superpowers.<sup>35</sup> In a 1976 paper on effective measures to reduce military confrontation in Europe, the IIB analyst Werner Hänisch stated that the "main concern is now to shift already existing initiatives and ideas on arms reduction to a practical level and to finally oblige international agreements on arms reduction."<sup>36</sup> Drawing on their insider knowledge about the new weapons and their technology, their consequences and their possible impact on the conduct of a future war, the experts continued to analyze and

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<sup>34</sup> For detailed information about the new weapon systems SS 20 and Pershing II and its influence on the East-West relations, see Bange, "SS 20 und Pershing II."

<sup>35</sup> Meaning for example meetings at the IFSH, the IISS, the IIP, and the Bergedorfer Gesprächskreis (Bergedorf discussion group).

<sup>36</sup> AUP, ASR 13682, "Paper on effective measures to reduce military confrontation and on arms reduction by Prof. Werner Hänisch," December 1976.

discuss means and ways to regain control over the new situation. The discussions were conducted in institutional meetings and workshops as well as in gatherings with political and military leaders, resulting in various suggestions and approaches.

The establishment of institutional relations now enabled an undeterred exchange on security-related issues, which quickly became a regular feature. One of those analysts with a military background and expertise on new weapon systems and their consequences was the former General of the Bundeswehr Wolf Graf von Baudissin.<sup>37</sup> In November 1980 Baudissin met with his East German counterpart Max Schmidt, also an expert on security issues, to discuss issues aggravating arms control and disarmament. Both, being the directors of foreign policy and political research institutions, used the well-established framework of contacts between the IPW and the IFSH to provide them with a professional framework for their talks.<sup>38</sup> Arguing from similar perceptions of the international situation, both pushed for continuing the process of détente, especially limiting the level of military confrontation in Europe. At this meeting, taking place at the IPW in East Berlin, Baudissin presented his concept of “cooperative arms control.” It focused first on arms control and second on the strict control of the development of new weapon technology. The aim was to “ensure the strategic stability through a maximum of vulnerable and a minimum of threatening military potential, thereby guaranteeing a second strike capability.”<sup>39</sup> A second idea, central to this concept, was to respect and acknowledge the threat-perception on the other side. This involved renouncing any maximum demands and providing transparency of one’s own planning and intentions.<sup>40</sup> The strains of thought developed during this meeting by Baudissin, Schmidt, and other experts led to the idea and conceptualization of a permanent working group for crisis management, arms control, disarmament, and confidence-building measures. It was thought this might reduce tensions and solve or limit conflicts early on. Although the concept had been thought up among academics, the elaborated results quickly returned to the political level because the IFSH maintained close

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<sup>37</sup> Prof. Wolf Graf von Baudissin, former General and military theorist, was director of the IFSH from 1971 to 1984.

<sup>38</sup> BA-SAPMO: DY 30 – IV 2/2.036-86. “Report of the residence of General off duty former General Wolf Graf von Baudissin from 6 to 9 November 1980 in Berlin as a guest of the IPW.”

<sup>39</sup> BA-SAPMO: DY 30 – IV 2/2.036-86. *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

relations with leading officials in the West German defense and foreign ministries, as well as with all major parties in Bonn. Similarly, the IPW forwarded its information to the Central Committee of the SED and various East German ministries.

### **The Development of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)**

While the directors of the foreign policy institutions continued their discussions, other high-ranking representatives of East and West German institutions also participated in international conferences. Experts of the institutes also analyzed additional security concepts such as the idea of nuclear and chemical weapon-free zones in Europe and the intensification of confidence-building measures (CBMs).

The Helsinki Final Act of the CSCE in 1975 included provisions for certain CBMs relating to military activities in Europe. States committed themselves to providing advance notification of military maneuvers. This was meant to reduce fear and suspicion in order to achieve a more accurate, reliable, and reciprocal assessment of military activities and other matters pertaining to mutual security. Overall, there was only a relatively brief mention of confidence- and security-building measures in the Final Act.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, according to the general idea of endorsing political détente with a military dimension, the member states of the Warsaw Treaty—like East Germany—understood CBMs as an essential part of military détente. In March 1978, East German directors Stefan Doernberg and Max Schmidt participated in the standing commission of research institutions of the socialist states to discuss the European security situation and how to achieve military détente.<sup>42</sup> In their conclusion both underlined the need to further develop and specify already existing CBMs in order to stimulate the process of military détente, as well as to link CBMs to the limitation and even the reduction of arms and forces. However, since these considerations would touch neutral and non-aligned states, as well as NATO and WTO member states, the commis-

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<sup>41</sup> The Helsinki Conference did not primarily focus on CBMs. Instead, they were dealt with in a small section of the Final Act. CBMs were considered a tool to manage the relationship between actors by providing assurance with regard to the purpose and character of military activities.

<sup>42</sup> BA-SAPMO, DY 30-IV B2/2.028-34, "Conclusions about the possibilities for progress in the military field in Europe. Sent by Stefan Doernberg and Max Schmidt to Albert Norden on 20 March 1978."

sion recommended a European conference on arms reduction and security in Europe.<sup>43</sup>

Still, East and West German foreign policy experts continued to further assess and specify CBMs. For the purpose of the conference of the academic council of the IPW on October 28, 1982, the IPW presented a preparatory paper concerning the implementation of CBMs.<sup>44</sup> The two authors suggested concrete steps of military détente based on equal and undiminished security for both sides. They defined three groups of possible confidence-building measures: "notification and information of military activities and maneuvers; mechanism of dialogue and consultation, including information about military equipment, budgets, arms and elements of strategic and tactical doctrines, as well as military restraint, concerning certain military activities in certain areas."<sup>45</sup> During the conference high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, the department for international relations from the Central Committee and the East German army intensely discussed these suggestions. They also considered West German ideas for transparency and verification, concluding that the key problem of CBMs was to realistically assess what specific role confidence-building measures might play in containing nuclear war and in limiting the arms race.<sup>46</sup> The conference further concluded that general agreements on CBMs needed to be installed based on the nonmodification of existing military potential, the establishment of nuclear and chemical weapon free zones, and the restriction to build-up military capability prior to negotiations on arms reductions.

Finally, the high-ranking military and political representatives agreed on the importance of "dialogue between socialist states and the states of Western Europe, furthermore, using Western Europe to reinforce the efforts of reintegrating the United States into the process of détente."<sup>47</sup> East German and East European foreign policy institutions assessed the possibilities, problems, and developments of CBMs. Their heads and leading personnel

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<sup>43</sup> The Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe took place from January 17, 1984, to September 19, 1986, adopting principle measures like notification, observation, forecasting, and inspection.

<sup>44</sup> AUP, ASR 13158, "Preparatory Paper on confidence and security building measures and the first step of a European conference by H. Schirmeister and H. Busse."

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 8. Restricted. "Information on the conference of the advisory committee of the GDR on requirements and problems of military détente arms limitation in Europe on 28 October 1982."

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

presented these concepts and ideas to an international audience. This approach enjoyed the support of the SED leadership, keen to initiate a search for new peace concepts and strategies. Equally, West German analysts devoted their attention to the development of new peace concepts and possibilities for arms limitation and even reduction. They too were somewhat limited by their institutional subordination to the ruling government and numerous ministries because problem-solving approaches were also highly influenced by the thinking of the involved ministry.<sup>48</sup> Beginning in the early 1980s, the discussion on questions of security policy and arms reductions embraced a large group of academics of various fields and more effectively included the civic area. In October 1987, the GDR founded the Academic Advisory Council for Peace Research, bringing together civilian and military analysts in order to implement the new security doctrine,<sup>49</sup> which had finally reached the institutions, as well as the military.<sup>50</sup>

## Conclusion

With their rather similar estimates about the international security situation at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, both sides—the policy analysts in East and West Germany—had established a common basis for discussion with enormous potential. While the Soviet and American governments were seemingly interrupting the continuity of détente, the European states, especially the FRG and the GDR, continued to develop ideas to maintain détente. Since it was a priority for both German states to preserve alliance loyalty to NATO and the WTO a number of bilateral contacts between East Berlin and Bonn shifted to a less noticeable level—the institutional level. Foreign policy research institutions were well-provided with intelligence and experts to assess the new military and political situation in Europe. As a result, contacts between academics led to the transfer of knowledge, know-how, and methods as well

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<sup>48</sup> The various ministries in West Germany (e.g., the Ministry of the Interior, the Defense Ministry, the Foreign Ministry) requested analysis and assessments from the institute. The ministry requesting an analysis influenced the outcome of it, depending on its priorities and for what use it was.

<sup>49</sup> On May 29, 1987, the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee issued a "revolutionary" communiqué stating that its military doctrine would be "strictly defensive" and would require only the minimal level of weapons "sufficient" for defense. Gorbachev suggested radical disarmament and a new war image. See Jones, "Gorbachevs Militärdoktrin."

<sup>50</sup> See Schreiber, "Als Offizier und Wissenschaftler."

as the exchange of values, interests, and attitudes. This resulted in a gradual and mutual undoing of prejudice and resentments. At the same time, the existing perception of distinction and ideology-based defensiveness was slowly but continually breaking up and replaced by a critical reassessment of the situation. Additionally, both sides exploited their contacts for information gathering, for possible interference by foreign policy experts, and for explaining their own positions in more detail. The increasing exposure to the liberal West and the socialist East refined the picture of the other side and more importantly gave the foreign policy experts more autonomy to critically analyze the situation. These personal exchanges of information and the reassessment of persisting images of the other led East Germany's foreign policy experts to realize that the premises of Marxism-Leninism were ill-suited for understanding the complexity of the new situation in international relations. This resulted in a "new thinking"<sup>51</sup> and in the 1980s provoked a partial break with prevailing party-imposed orthodoxy. Simultaneously, representatives of West Germany's foreign policy institutions came to a better understanding of their counterparts in the East and realized the necessity to communicate and to cooperate with them.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, within the context of the overall East-West conflict between antagonistic societal concepts, these bilateral contacts were never completely free of politicization—yet they grossly broadened the perspectives of each other respectively.

Foreign policy experts played a crucial role in the process of détente from the 1970s to the very end of the conflict between East and West. The establishment of close contacts on both sides—across, through, or underneath the Iron Curtain—enlightened Eastern and Western perceptions of each other, reduced mutual misperceptions, and thereby helped to reshape the dynamic of East-West relations. Their work behind the scenes became an asset in the attempt to maintain détente—while their analyses, once published, not only influenced political decision-making but also educated a wider public about "the other side."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The concept of "new thinking" was Gorbachev's slogan for a foreign policy based on shared moral and ethical principles to solve global problems rather than on Marxist-Leninist concepts of irreconcilable conflict between capitalism and communism.

<sup>52</sup> BAK, B 395-22, "Paper on the preparation of the academic panel of the CSCE Final Act, concerning humane and social disciplines, on 6 December 1978, by the BIOst."

<sup>53</sup> AUP, ASR 13382. The role of foreign policy experts was also discussed during a conference of the International Institute for Peace in Vienna on January 23–24, 1981, demanding that experts be given a more influential role and that their analyses be made public.

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The institutional, yet clandestine contacts between East and West German institutes for political analysis helped to stabilize East-West *détente* when the deterioration in superpower-relations threatened to throw Europe back to the Cold War years of the 1950s. Beyond these years of crisis, the continuing exchange on security issues across the German-German frontline of the blocs sufficiently watered down harmful images and stereotypes to establish a much more refined, accurate, and humanized picture of the other. This eventually invited a new thinking on security and military policies, resulting in a concept for a common European security system—which took on its own dynamic in the second half of the 1980s.





**PART V**

**DÉTENTE IN EUROPE:  
CHANGE IN DIPLOMATIC  
FRAMINGS**



# Pathfinders and Perpetuators of Détente

## Small States of NATO and the Long Détente: The Case of Denmark, 1969–1989

*Poul Villaume*

Most international research to date on East-West détente and the CSCE process of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s has focused on the major West European powers and on the two superpowers, although some focus has also been directed toward the significant role of the so-called N+N (neutral and nonaligned) countries in the process.<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, the specific role of the smaller NATO countries has received little attention. This chapter compensates for this omission by highlighting the détente and CSCE policies of Denmark, and provides a comparative perspective of the détente policies of similarly sized NATO countries such as Norway, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

Until 1972–73, the Netherlands maintained a skeptical and even hostile attitude toward Ostpolitik, détente, and the CSCE process. At this point the Dutch tried to turn Basket III issues on freer movement etc. into an ideological bludgeon against the Eastern bloc—a line pursued by the Netherlands even until the CSCE follow-up meetings of the 1980s.<sup>2</sup> Most

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<sup>1</sup> The growing body of research literature on the early European East-West détente process includes, as far as major Western European powers are concerned, Wenger, *Origins*; Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975*; Schulz and Schwartz, *The Strained Alliance*; Scott-Smith and Aubourg, *Atlantic, Euroatlantic*; see also Villaume and Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*; the role of the N+N countries in the CSCE process has been examined most thoroughly in Fischer, *Neutral Power in the CSCE*.

<sup>2</sup> Baudet, “The Netherlands”; Baudet, “‘It Was the Cold War’”; see also Romano, *From Détente in Europe*, 154 f.; author’s interviews with Harris Nielsen (November 9, 2012) and Ambassador Thomas Rehnagel (December 17, 2012), Danish CSCE diplomats in the 1980s. In mid-July 1975, the State Department characterized the attitude of the Dutch CSCE delegation as “energetic hard-lining” (Gerald R. Ford Library, Ann Arbor, Michi-

Nordic countries in and outside of NATO—Norway, Sweden, and even Finland—kept a positive, yet comparatively low profile in the CSCE diplomatic preparations during the early 1970s, Basket III issues included.<sup>3</sup>

In comparison, Denmark, along with Belgium (and sometimes even Norway and Canada), became known among the irreverent major NATO allies in the early 1970s as “the wet front” because of their persistently (allegedly overly) positive attitudes toward East-West détente and toward the CSCE in particular.<sup>4</sup> Almost completely overlooked in the existing international research, Denmark pursued remarkably consistent and proactive—at times blatantly activist—détente policies; first during the 1960s to promote East-West dialogue in Europe in general and with the idea of an all-European security conference in particular; then by coordinating the positions of the nine EC countries thereby playing the role of diplomatic “steering wheel”<sup>5</sup> for the West during key negotiation phases on Basket III issues in the CSCE from 1972 to 1975, and in part also in 1977–78; and finally by actively pushing for the survival of the CSCE process in the early 1980s and for the humanitarian dimension of the CSCE in the late 1980s.

Thus, traditional international relations theories on specific small state behavior (in or outside of alliances) do not seem to apply here. Rather, explanations of early active Danish détente and CSCE policies are to be sought in specific historical experiences, foreign and domestic policy traditions, and probably even geostrategic circumstances of the countries in question.

The Danish foreign policy profile in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century was heavily influenced by Denmark’s traumatic defeat in the

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gan, Trip Briefing Books and Cables, Box 10. Dept. of State Briefing Paper: “Summary of Individual Country Positions, n.d.,” July 26–August 4, 1975).

<sup>3</sup> On Norway, see Mevik, *Sikkerhet i samarbeid*; on Sweden, see Makko, “Multilateralism”; on Finland, see Fischer, *Neutral Power*. In the 1980s, Norwegian détente policies became more high-profiled, siding with NATO countries Denmark, Canada, and West Germany, which insisted upon keeping the CSCE process alive.

<sup>4</sup> Romano, *From Détente in Europe*, 155; “‘CSCE: National Attitudes,’ Braithwaite to Allan,” April 25, 1972, in Bennett and Hamilton, *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, 40ff. According to the State Department, however, Belgium did not assume overall leadership on any particular issue during the CSCE negotiations (Trip Briefing Books and Cables, Box 10, Ford Library. Dept. of State Briefing Paper: “Summary of Individual Country Positions, n.d.,” July 26–August 4, 1975.)

<sup>5</sup> A term used by Ambassador Berno Kjeldsen, Danish CSCE diplomat in the 1970s, in his unpublished paper, “The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe,” 19; author’s interview with Berno Kjeldsen (September 23, 2011).

1864 Danish-German war over Schleswig, which led to the loss of one-fifth of Danish territory, only to be regained after World War I. During the 1920s and 1930s, Denmark pursued an active policy of small state neutrality and limited armaments, explicitly based on the League of Nations principles and international law; thus, Denmark should be seen in the role of an international bridge-builder and honest broker between major powers. However, the ominous shadow of neighboring Nazi Germany increasingly stifled the freedom of action of Danish foreign policy.<sup>6</sup>

After 1945, Nazi occupation during World War II and the emerging Cold War prompted Danish decision-makers to forego isolated neutrality by joining the North Atlantic Alliance in 1949, thus bringing Denmark, a strategically exposed frontline state between East and West, under the American nuclear umbrella. Even so, during the 1950s Denmark pursued a balanced policy of integration and screening toward NATO, a policy that has been characterized in Danish Cold War historiography as being a “loyal ally with reservations.” The most significant and spectacular Danish reservations were the denial of foreign NATO bases and nuclear weapons in peacetime on Danish soil (Greenland excluded); beyond this came varying degrees of skepticism or outright opposition toward a number of perceived unduly challenging measures or provocative elements of Cold War policies of the U.S. and other major NATO powers toward the Soviet Bloc.

The main rationale behind Denmark’s national security posture during the early Cold War was a determined attempt by alternating Danish governments to keep the Scandinavian and Nordic region as an area of comparatively low tension and demilitarization between East and West in Europe, thereby hoping to further Denmark’s contribution to East-West dialogue, cooperation and relaxation of tensions between the two blocs in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> These important aspects of Danish foreign and security policies during the 1920s and 1930s are brilliantly documented and analyzed in Gram-Skjoldager, *Fred og folkeret*.

<sup>7</sup> See Villaume, *Allieret med forbehold*; Villaume, “Neither Appeasement nor Servility.”

### **Prelude: Early Danish Advocacy of a European Security Conference<sup>8</sup>**

The first dozen years of Denmark's initial military adaptation to NATO culminated in the establishment of the Baltic Command (COMBALTAP) in 1961–62. In view of Denmark's low NATO profile during the 1950s, the new and much closer military cooperation with West Germany in the framework of COMBALTAP signified a major step in Denmark's military integration into NATO. As such, and according to key decision-makers in Copenhagen, it required political counterbalancing measures toward the Eastern bloc. In 1962, Denmark signed a comprehensive agreement with the Soviet Union on cultural exchange (an expansion of existing bilateral commercial and cultural agreements dating from 1956). Yet the Danish government's focus was the smaller East European countries. In 1959, Danish Social Democratic leader Jens Otto Krag was the first foreign minister from a NATO country to pay an official visit to Poland, and during the following years Denmark developed closer relations not only with the comparatively independent Polish foreign minister Adam Rapacki and his government, but also with several other East European countries. Danish foreign minister Per Hækkerup (1962–66) engaged in what could be termed a Danish Ost-Politik—rather intense mutual visits and bilateral diplomatic, commercial, and cultural contacts with most of the Warsaw Pact countries.

At the closed session of the NATO Council Meeting in December 1964, Hækkerup explained that the overall purpose of current Danish diplomacy toward the smaller Eastern bloc countries was to encourage tendencies to increase their degree of independence from Soviet hegemony. The basic concept, then, was a kind of wedge strategy, aimed at enhancing cooperation between smaller countries in East and West across the Iron Curtain dividing Europe.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, Denmark seems to have realized,

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<sup>8</sup> For more archival documentation, see Borring Olesen and Villaume, *I blokddannelsernes tegn*, 575–94, 648–56. For an earlier account of Danish Ostpolitik and détente policies from the 1960s to the 1980s, based on secondary sources, see Nørgaard, Carlsen, and Petersen, "Danish Ostpolitik, 1967–1993." By contrast, a recent major account of "the Cold War in Denmark," Jensen's *Ulve, får og vogtere* (in two volumes, 1,500 pages in total), does not mention Danish détente policies at all.

<sup>9</sup> Parliamentary Foreign Policy Committee (hereafter FPC) [Udenrigspolitisk Nævn], November 11, 1964, Foreign Ministry Archives (hereafter FMA), Danish State Archives (hereafter DSA), Copenhagen (all proceedings of the FPC are strictly confidential); DSA, FMA, ad 5.K.2. "Notat," December 11, 1964; Brussels, NATO Headquarters, NATO Archives, Per Hækkerup, C-VR(64)55, December 15, 1964, 34.

earlier than any other NATO government, that a viable strategy to mellow the regimes in Eastern Europe and to loosen Moscow's grip on its smaller allies could be an early endorsement by NATO of the convening of an all-European security conference. Originally proposed by the Soviet Union in 1954, and immediately rejected by NATO, the idea of such a conference was revived by some East European countries in 1965, and almost immediately seized upon by the Danish government. The security conference idea was included in a joint Polish-Danish communiqué in August 1965—the first official, if indirect, endorsement by a NATO government of the conference idea.

In January 1966, the head of the Danish Foreign Ministry explained to the U.S. State Department that Danish policies toward Eastern Europe were a “bridge building programme” and an “offensive dual posture to balance NATO's defensive posture.” In other words, the Danish political-diplomatic offensive should help counterbalance NATO's military build-up in the face of the perceived threat from the Soviet bloc. This policy of “dual postures,” actually dating from Danish NATO policies in the 1950s, points directly toward the conclusions of the Harmel Report some two years later, adopted by NATO in December 1967. The gist of the Harmel Report, to a considerable degree based upon a Danish-Norwegian text draft, was that NATO had a dual task—military deterrence as well as political détente, and that the two did not conflict; rather, they complemented each other.<sup>10</sup> As will be shown, it was no coincidence that Denmark (and Norway) were and remained probably the most consistent and enthusiastic supporters among NATO member countries of these “Harmel principles.”

In the late spring of 1966, shortly after de Gaulle's announcement of French withdrawal from NATO's military cooperation, Danish prime minister J. O. Krag together with Per Hækkerup argued in the NATO Council that the Alliance had to rethink its position: NATO should not only take care of the military defense of Western Europe; the Alliance

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. National Archives (hereafter USNA), box 1586, RG 59, SNF 1967–69, “The Harmel Study and French Pol tw the Atlantic Alliance, Dir of Intell&Research,” REU-60, November 2, 1967; *ibid.*, “US Mission NATO to DeptState,” NATO A-13, November 11, 1967; DSA, FMA, 5.E.110.d., w/enclose, “Hjorth-Nielsen to Thorsen,” July 6, 1967; “FMC to DANATO Paris, Harmel-planen,” October 24, 1967; FPC, October 31 and December 8, 1967; FMA, 5.E.110.d. “Notits. Harmel-studiet. Standpunktet v. udg. af sept. 1967,” September 27, 1967; USNA, RG 59, box 1586, SNF 1967-69, “US Mission NATO, 241,” November 3, 1967; FMA, FPC, December 8, 1967. Borring Olesen and Villaume, *Dansk Udenrigspolitik Historie*.

should also become a proactive and positive force for negotiations with the Eastern Bloc on disarmament and all-European security. Remarkably, at the NATO Council meeting in May 1966, Denmark tabled a proposal that the Alliance should officially support the convening of an all-European security conference. The Danish proposal was supported only by Norway in the Council; the general feeling among other allies was that the Danish idea was premature, or reflected impatience—or both.<sup>11</sup>

Yet the rejection of the Danish proposal by their NATO allies did not make Denmark change its course. On the contrary, after having expanded her contacts to East European countries (Hungary, Romania) in the fall of 1966, Denmark played a significant role in the drafting of a confidential policy paper for the NATO Council meeting in December 1966 on the expansion of bilateral and multilateral contacts between East and West in Europe. A year later, at the Council meeting in December 1967, Danish foreign minister Hans Tabor declared that a fundamental feature of Danish foreign policy was to work for détente and the building of mutual East-West trust, thus paving the way for what Tabor called the construction of a comprehensive European security system. According to the Danes, an important means for this was the call for a pan-European security conference.<sup>12</sup>

### **Danish Longer Term Visions of Détente, December 1969**

At the NATO Council Meeting in December 1969, Danish liberal foreign minister Poul Hartling unveiled the country's longer term vision of European détente: a continual negotiation process between East and West

<sup>11</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson Library (hereafter LBJL), box 168, NSF: Den. Cab. "MemCon: President & PM Krag," April 27, 1966; USNA, RG 59, box 2113, CF 1964-66; "DeptState Circular 2187," May 6, 1966; London, Kew, United Kingdom National Archives (hereafter: UKNA), FO 371/185686. "UKEmb to FO," April 6 & May 5, 1966; DSA, FMA, FPC April 30, 1966; DSA. "Minutes of Danish Cabinet Meetings," May 31, 1966; FPC, May 31, 1966; LBJL, box 168, NSF-CF. "DeptState to Sec 22," June 2, 1966; Peter, Rosenbach et al., *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1966* (AAPBD). Dok. 169. Ruete an NATO Paris, May 27, 1966, 723ff.; NATO Archives. "Haekkerup and Lyng," C-VR(66)25, June 8, 1966, 11-15.

<sup>12</sup> FPC, Dec 7, 1966; USNA, RG 59, box 2112, CFPF 1964-66. "AmEmb Cph to DeptState, A-343," December 31, 1966, enclose. 2: "MemCon: Boel & Smith," December 20, 1966; FMA, 5.E.100.d. "Referat af forhandl på NATO's minist.rådsmøde," December 13-14, 1967; NATO Archives. Hans Tabor, C-VR(67)50, December 13, 1967, 22f.



through bilateral as well as multilateral contacts, hopefully leading to a chain of conferences and assisted by a permanent negotiation apparatus. Indeed, this vision had strong similarities to the actual chain of events from the early 1970s throughout the 1980s. Danish policy-makers had no illusions that the road to a lasting, peaceful political order in Europe would indeed be long and tortuous; yet they kept insisting that the crucial thing was to initiate the actual diplomatic process, both for objective reasons of security policy and because of the expectations of public opinion concerning NATO's new role; NATO had to keep the initiative vis-à-vis détente proposals from the East. Concerns of the Nixon administration that a conference would be in danger of yielding unilateral concessions to the East, thus creating an illusionary and potentially dangerous "détente," were countered by smaller West European countries, at this time more often than not with Denmark at the forefront: NATO as an alliance had everything to gain and nothing to lose by taking a positive stand toward the idea of a security conference. With the support of the UK, Norway, and Belgium, Minister Hartling criticized the U.S. draft communiqué from the NATO ministerial meeting for imposing such far-reaching conditions for a conference, including endorsement of almost all the basic principles of NATO, essentially forcing indefinite postponement of the conference.<sup>13</sup>

Significantly, at the NATO meeting Hartling also emphasized that in contrast to the Soviet Union, Denmark did not want the conference to lead to a freeze of the European status quo, and in this connection the Danish foreign minister referred to those forces in Eastern Europe which appeared to regard the idea of a conference as a tool to loosen the Soviet grip on its allied states. The Danish government believed that the East European countries were interested in a security conference because they feared both the Soviet Union and Germany: as long as a conference process was ongoing, there was little to no risk of new Soviet assaults; at the same time the process itself could contribute to the dissolution of the threat against Eastern Europe posed by the unresolved German problem.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> FMA, FPC, October 8, November 21, and December 9, 1969; USNA, box 506, Conf Lot Files. Background Paper: "Europ Security Conf.," November 22, 1969; FMA, 119.K.4.0. "DANATO to For.Min., 'Rådsmødet på højt niveau,'" November 5, 1969; *ibid.*, "DANATO to For.Min.," November 17, 1969; *ibid.*, Rådsmøder Nov 26–27, 1969," November 27, 1969; *ibid.*, "Ref., Dan-Jugosl embedsmands-drøft. om europ. Sikkerhedsprobl.," December 15 and 16, 1969.

<sup>14</sup> NATO Archives. Hartling, C-VR(69)55, Part I, December 4, 1969, 40–43; FMA, 119.K.4.0. "DANATO to For.Min., For. Minister's Presentation at NATO Minist. Mtg, Dec 4"; *ibid.*, "DANATO to For.Min., 'Rådsmødet på højt niveau,'" November 5, 1969;

Supported by likeminded allies such as Norway, Belgium, and Canada, Danish efforts to convince a NATO majority were partially successful. In a separate declaration attached to the final communiqué from the December 1969 meeting there was, for the first time, a reference to the readiness of the Alliance to conduct preliminary talks and later negotiations (bilaterally and/or multilaterally), with the Warsaw Pact countries on “cultural exchanges” and on “freer movement of people, ideas, and information between countries of East and West.” However, the Danes did not fully succeed: the declaration of the NATO Council carefully avoided explicitly supporting a European security conference.<sup>15</sup>

In the meantime, Danish proactive “East diplomacy” had been noticed by Egon Bahr, the main architect of the West German Ostpolitik and close security policy adviser of Chancellor Willy Brandt. In 1968, Bahr directly encouraged the new liberal-conservative Danish government to use the relatively close Danish-Polish relations to serve in a mediating capacity between Warsaw and Bonn—and, by implication, between Moscow and Bonn. By the end of 1970, both Bonn and Warsaw explicitly expressed their high appreciation to Copenhagen over the Danes’ bridge-building efforts. By late 1969, Danish bilateral negotiations with East European countries—also comprising the more independent Romania—had the additional objective, as explained by Minister of Disarmament K. Helveg Petersen (in Warsaw in November 1969), to gradually nurture views and thinking, which in the long term could be included in multilateral negotiations between East and West, thus paving the way for smaller European countries to gain greater influence over international developments.<sup>16</sup>

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ibid., 105.K.1.a. “Ref., For.Min. Conversation Oct 17, 1969,” w/ “Gen.Sec. Brosio in NATO’s Civilian HQ, October 20, 1969.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c691204b.htm>; FMA, 119.K.4.0. ”DANATO to For.Min., NATO: Medio Nov.–Dec., 1969,” December 19, 1969.

<sup>16</sup> Bonn, Fr. Ebert Stiftung, Depositum Egon Bahr, Box 1036. “P.M.: Referat des Gesprächs des Ministers Helveg Petersen in Warschau am 29. Mai 1968 . . . , Polen 1968–1972”; FMA, 119.K.4.a/4. “Notits. De dansk/polske drøft. medio maj,” May 29, 1968; ibid., “Resumé af dansk-polske nedrustn.ekspertdrøft. i Warszawa,” June 4, 1968; ibid., “Paludan to AmbBonn, Magtafkaldelseserklær,” June 13, 1968; ibid., 119.K.4.0. “Foreign Ministry to DANATO. Nedrustn.sektion i Sekr.,” July 8, 1968; FMA, 119.K.4.a/4. “Ref., Helveg Petersens besøg i Bonn,” June 15–16, 1969; ibid., “Amb-Dane Warszawa no. 96,” June 25, 1969; “Notits: Dansk-polske nedrustn.drøft.,” October 10 and 13, 1969; ibid., “Notat: Samtale Oct 28, 1969, m. polske vice-udenrigsmin. Winiewicz”; ibid., “Ref af Helveg Petersens samtale Nov 20, 1969, m. vice-udenrigsmin.Winiewicz”; ibid., “Notits: Besøg i Rumænien,” December 11, 1969; “Notits: Udvikl. i de dansk-polske nedrustn.drøft. 1968–1970,” January 29, 1971; USNA,

Thus, comprehensive and long-term strategic thinking lay behind the course of Danish security and détente policies in the mid- to late-1960s and beyond. A key element here, often explicitly stated by foreign ministers Per Hækkerup, Poul Hartling, and (from 1971) K. B. Andersen, was that the smaller and medium-sized European countries, in West and East, should not leave the international and European process of relaxing Cold War tensions to the great powers, or to “the two superpowers,” a term used by both Danish and Polish officials—and by Poul Hartling himself—during their negotiations in 1970.<sup>17</sup>

At the following NATO ministerial meeting in May 1970, the United States accepted a final communiqué that represented a “significant further step” compared to the NATO meeting six months earlier, according to the Danish Foreign Ministry. NATO ministers declared their readiness to establish multilateral contacts with all interested governments in order to explore not *if* but *when* it was possible to initiate a European conference process with items on the agenda as proposed by both West and East.<sup>18</sup>

### Turning Point for the Security Conference Idea, 1970–1971

International and European relaxation of tensions did indeed appear to move forward in 1970, in part due to the West German Ostpolitik. In August, Chancellor Willy Brandt signed the historic agreements between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union on complete mutual renunciation of the use of power, and on technical and trade cooperation.

Yet according to Danish foreign policy officials, progress made around 1970 in the great power détente also entailed a certain risk that the interests of small and medium powers in Europe would be overlooked in the process. Poul Hartling felt that the NATO great powers’ consultations with the smaller NATO countries over Berlin were so poor that it had been almost impossible for the small allies to state their own positions, and in the autumn of 1970 Hartling shared these concerns with the foreign ministers of both Belgium and Yugoslavia. Thus it was prior to the NATO

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RG 59, box 2043, SNF 196769. “AmEmb Cph to SecState, 2909,” October 28, 1969; *ibid.*, “AmEmb Cph to DeptState,” A-423, October 31, 1969.

<sup>17</sup> 119.K.4.a/4. “Notat. Dansk-polske nedrustn.drøft. i Warszawa, March 16-18, 1970,” March 22, 1970; see also FMA, “Hartling in FPC,” November 19, 1970; FMA, *Folketingets Forhandlinger* 1969-7, Feb 19, 1970, col. 3708.

<sup>18</sup> FPC, June 12, 1970; *ibid.*, 105.S.20. “DANATO to For.Min., NATO: April & May 1970,” June 8, 1970.

ministerial meeting in December 1970 that Denmark took the lead with other small NATO countries—Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway—in asserting the influence of the smaller states. As Hartling told the parliamentary FPC in confidence, he did not want the great powers to act over their heads and insisted on an early multilateralization of the European détente process.

However, in terms of multilateralization the December 1970 NATO Council meeting was a disappointment to the smaller member countries. The United States, supported by the UK and others, still showed considerable skepticism toward the conference idea and even attempted to postpone proposals to probe multilateral deliberations. The United States in particular insisted that a detailed charting of the substance of East-West negotiations should take precedence over procedures, while Denmark maintained that procedures in themselves, in which even the smaller countries could contribute from the beginning, would promote substance. Denmark remained isolated regarding its insistence upon multilateralization of preparatory negotiations, however.<sup>19</sup> This was clear from the final communiqué of the NATO meeting, which made a satisfying result of the Four Power talks on Berlin “and other current negotiations” a prerequisite to the initiation of multilateral probes on a security conference.

Since this was an unsatisfying result from their point of view, the Danes along with other small NATO countries attempted to take an active part in the consultations on the great power negotiations over Berlin. When this turned out to be unsuccessful, the Danes focused on two other objectives during the spring of 1971: first, to emphasize to concerned East European countries such as Romania the Danish view that the prospective enlargement of the EC with four new member countries—the UK, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway—should not exclude or be an obstacle to East-West détente and cooperation in Europe. On the contrary, the EC should contribute to an even more comprehensive and constructive dialogue be-

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<sup>19</sup> FMA, 105.K.1.a. “Ref. af drøft. i Udenrigsmin. Sept. 9, 1970 under Pierre Harmels officielle besøg,” September 10, 1970; *ibid.*, 105.S.1. “DANATO to For.Min., NATO: Sept.-Okt. 1970,” October 30, 1970; *ibid.*, loc.cit., December 17, 1970; USNA, RG 59, box 2238, SNF 1970-73. “AmEmb Cph to SecState, 8726,” October 15, 1970; *ibid.*, “AmEmb Cph to DeptState, A-343,” December 17, 1970; *ibid.*, box 522, Conf Lot Files. “SecState Wash to All NATO Posts, SECTO 14,” December 4, 1970; *ibid.*, “Rogers to Wash, SECTO 16, NATOMIN: Afternoon Session Dec 3,” December 4, 1970; FMA, FPC, Nov 11, December 9, 1970; Schwarz, AAPBD. Dok. 586. Grewe (NATO) an AA, December 4, 1970, 2185-2192; NATO Archives. Poul Hartling, C-VR(70)61, Pt. I, December 3, 1970; *ibid.*, cf. Sven Stray, pt. II.

tween Eastern and Western Europe. Second, along with Norway in particular, Denmark attempted to block further preconditions to a multilateralization of East-West contacts after the end of the Berlin negotiations.

Both of these Danish efforts were successful at the NATO meeting, as was a Danish attempt—with Norwegian and French support—to block a South European demand to have a “security clause” inserted in the final communiqué to the effect that a deteriorating international situation in the Middle East, for example, would lead to a review of NATO’s position on a European security conference. The Danes felt that such a clause would cast doubt on NATO’s intentions.<sup>20</sup>

Prior to the NATO ministerial meeting in December 1971, Norway and France supported Danish efforts to accelerate the conference process through a statement from NATO that the alliance was prepared to undertake multilateral probes for a security conference as soon as the intra-German talks were concluded, that is prior to the signing by the four big powers of the final act of the Berlin agreement. Although this was rejected by the other allied countries, headed by the United States and West Germany, the United States demonstrated for the first time a positive attitude toward the conference idea. Prior to and at the December 1971 NATO meeting, the United States and Denmark were, for the first time, essentially in agreement on the European security conference. It was hoped that the preparatory conference, to be held in Helsinki in late 1972, would contribute to breaking down barriers between East and West, and the conference to initiate a long-term process. Significantly, according to the United States delegation at the NATO meeting, Danish viewpoints had contributed directly to the reformulation of the U.S. position.<sup>21</sup>

In Copenhagen, the December 1971 NATO meeting was regarded as a turning point and a victory for Danish détente viewpoints promoted in NATO since mid-1966. At the same time, it was important for Danish decision-makers that the current momentum of the conference idea could be translated into binding commitments by the Eastern side to accept substantial issues on the conference agenda, that is issues relating not only to

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<sup>20</sup> FMA, 119.K.4.a/1. “Talking Points, for convers. w/ Romanian Foreign Minister Manescu during Visit to Cph,” March 18-23, 1971; *ibid.*, FPC, Feb 11, March 4, May 5 and 26, June 23, 1971.

<sup>21</sup> FMA, FPC, Dec 7 & 10, 1971; *ibid.*, 105.K.1.a. “DANATO to For.Min., NATO: Medio Nov 1971-medio Jan 1972,” January 25, 1972; *ibid.*, 5.B.55.a. “Bierring (DANATO) to Dyvig (For.Min.),” January 26, 1972; NATO Archives. K.B. Andersen, C-VR(71)69, Pt. II, December 9, 1971.

general declarations on the recognition of the European status quo and on mutual renunciation of use of force, but also, most importantly, on the principle of “freer movement” between East and West of people, information, ideas, and cultural relations. Remarkably, at the end of the official visit of Soviet prime minister Alexei Kosygin to Denmark in early December 1971, the Danes succeeded in inserting into the joint communiqué, for the first time in a joint statement with an Eastern bloc country, wording referring to freer movement. Four months later, in April 1972, Danish Social Democratic foreign minister K. B. Andersen succeeded in obtaining similar wording in the joint communiqué after his visit to Bucharest—although it cost Andersen thirty-six hours of negotiations with the Romanian leadership.<sup>22</sup>

### **Helsinki-Geneva-Helsinki, 1972–1975: “Fingerprinting” Baskets III and IV**

Denmark was reluctant to support the position of certain NATO countries—in particular, the United States, the UK, and the Netherlands, which held that the West should start out with maximum demands, and decline altogether to convene a conference if there were no prospect of results on the issue of freer movement. Conversely, Denmark proposed that in the declaration from the preparatory security conference, the expansion of cultural exchanges—in the spirit of UNESCO—between East and West should be more clearly expressed as a factor promoting détente; however, the United States diluted the Danish proposal on the grounds that it was too imprecise.

In the first half of 1972, Denmark also opposed a strong demand among many NATO allies to establish comparatively firm guidelines for the preparatory conference consultations in Helsinki. Danish decision-makers wanted to avoid narrow guidelines that could become needless impediments to the freedom of action of the individual allied countries in Helsinki, and in particular to bilateral contacts between the delegations of NATO countries and other (Warsaw Pact and neutral/nonaligned) European countries. The Danes argued that their recommended approach

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<sup>22</sup> USNA. RG 59, box 2238, SNF 1970–73. “AmEmb Cph to SecState, 312,” January 20, 1972; *ibid.*, “AmEmb Warsaw to SecState, 1459,” April 14, 1972; *ibid.*, 1490, April 18, 1972; FMA, 5.B.55.a. “Notits: Udenrigsmin.s pressemøde Feb 1, 1972: Sikkerhedskonf. og MBFR,” January 31, 1972; *ibid.*, cf. FPC, April 6, 1972.

would create benefits for the smaller countries, whose efforts could influence the allies in a mediating and moderating way.<sup>23</sup>

All of this did not mean that Denmark downplayed the general demands of freer movement of people and ideas. On the contrary, in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly in September 1972, Foreign Minister K. B. Andersen explicitly criticized the increasingly harsh restrictions on the right of Soviet citizens to leave their country on legitimate grounds. Denmark also rejected Soviet demands that the principles on renunciation of the use of force and recognition of existing borders in Europe should be awarded primacy at the security conference; according to the Danish view, such issues should be treated on equal terms with issues such as confidence-building measures (CBMs) (concerning military exercises, principles on mutual force reductions, etc.) and, not least, promotion of human and cultural contacts.

At the preparatory conference with thirty-two European representatives in attendance (plus the mission chiefs of the United States and Canada) in Helsinki in late 1972, Denmark strongly emphasized the latter point, also referring to the extensive Danish promotion of cultural cooperation with the Eastern bloc countries during the past decade; the Danes also stressed that observance or violation of human rights had international consequences, sometimes with far-reaching impact, and therefore human rights had their proper place among the principles of inter-state relations. The Danish side felt a clear Soviet aversion toward this point, so the Danes planned to advance it with so much weight from the beginning that the likelihood of balanced negotiations was enhanced—their goal being to ensure that the level of compromise to be reached was not set too low.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> FMA, ad 5.B.43. "Henning [Hjorth-Nielsen] to Troels [Oldenburg]," May 12, 1972; *ibid.*, 5.B.55.a. "DANATO to For.Min., 'NATO: Foråret 1972,'" May 15, 1972; *ibid.*, "Notat: Den politiske komité . . .," P.I., May 26, 1972; *ibid.*, "DANATO to For.Min., 'NATO: Sommeren 1972,'" September 20, 1972; *ibid.*, FPC, May 24, 1972.

<sup>24</sup> FMA, 5.B.55.a. "Notits: Udenrigsmin.s samtale m. udenrigsmin. Gromyko," September 26 and 27, 1972; *ibid.*, 105.T.1.f. "Notits til Direktøren: Kulturelt samarbejde ml. Danmark og østlandene," October 19, 1972; *ibid.*, 5.B.55.a. "Talking points til brug under bilat. konsult. m. amb. Zorin," October 27, 1972; *ibid.*, "Notits. Møde i Soc.dem.s udenrigs- og forsvarspol. udv.," November 16, 1972; *ibid.*, "Notits til PK.I., Danmarks indlæg i generaldebatten på MPT," November 30, 1972; *ibid.*, "Notat: Foreløbig vurdering af forløbet af MPT's første samling," November 22–December 15, 1972; *ibid.*, "Notits. Møde i Soc.dem.s udenrigs- og forsvarspol. udv. Jan 10, 1973: Amb. Tscherning's indlæg på MPT Nov 11, 1972 & Jan 4, 1973"; *ibid.*, FPC, September 13, December 6 and 13, 1972; cf. K.B. Andersen, *Folketingets Forhandlinger 1972–73*, Nov 22, 1972, col. 1294–1304.

Space does not permit a more detailed account of Danish initiatives and coordinating activities during the complex and cumbersome multilateral negotiation processes from late 1972 to mid-1975, that is the Multilateral Preparatory Talks (MPT) in Helsinki (November 1972–June 1973), and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (September 1973–July 1975). Denmark's role during these sessions may be summarized as follows.

In the early phase of the MPT, in January 1973, during internal consultations among the nine countries of the EC, Denmark volunteered in assuming, on behalf of the EC and NATO, the role of sponsor and coordinator of the third part (later named Basket III) of the comprehensive Western proposal for the agenda of the upcoming security conference. This was the part on human contacts and exchange of information across East-West borders, supplemented by issues of culture and education (the other two parts—Basket I and Basket II—concerned security issues and economic cooperation).

The Danish sponsorship of the issue of freer movement of and contacts between people and information at the MPT and CSCE meetings was seen in Copenhagen as a natural consequence of views consistently put forward by Denmark in and outside of NATO at least since the early or mid-1960s. Such Danish views stressed the importance of top-level political East-West dialogue, supplemented by human East-West contacts with concrete and tangible benefits to ordinary people. At the same time, the controversial and sensitive potential of these issues in East-West interactions made it all the more important that they did not lead to misunderstandings and unnecessary confrontations that might obstruct the very purpose of détente, according to leading Danish officials; they trusted that Denmark with its well-known record as a small state devoted to détente and to the idea of a security conference could not reasonably be suspected of pursuing or being guided by ulterior motives.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, the initial Polish reaction to the Danish Basket III proposal in MPT in early 1973 was indisputably negative. Ambassador Skjold Mellbin, Danish chief CSCE negotiator, diplomatically repudiated the Poles in kind, and it soon turned out that the Polish hard-liners were not even backed by the Soviet MPT delegation, although the Soviets and their other allies were never happy with the Danish proposal.<sup>26</sup> According

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<sup>25</sup> Mellbin, *Konferencen om Sikkerhed*, 21f.; Mellbin, "Appendix: From Helsinki," 245f.

<sup>26</sup> DSA, FMA, box 45, 5.B.55/10. Amb Helsingfors, amtels 52 & 54, February 7 and 8, 1973; Mellbin, "Appendix: From Helsinki . . .," 247. For further archival documentation on the following sections, see also Petersen, *Europæisk og globalt engagement*.



to the Danes, the general pattern at the MPT was that NATO countries Belgium, Holland, and Italy remained reserved or negative toward achievements as well as opportunities and the utility of the MPT and the security conference as such; in contrast, the Scandinavian countries, West Germany, the UK, France, and to some extent also the United States (whose role, however, was mostly hesitant and rather passive) sided with each other in a constructive and positive manner.<sup>27</sup> In any case, all essential elements of the Danish (and Western) proposal made it to the final MPT document in June 1973, and were presented as recommendations for the first stage of the CSCE meeting of foreign ministers in Helsinki in early July 1973. At this meeting, Denmark also presented its detailed text proposal on measures to facilitate contacts and visits between split families; this important element of Basket III became a major Danish flagship throughout the CSCE negotiations.<sup>28</sup>

During the second half of 1973, Denmark held the (rotating) chairmanship of the European Communities, which offered Danish negotiators a distinct role in coordinating and presenting the positions of the EC countries, and subsequently of the NATO countries and, by and large, of the Western side as such, at the “second stage” CSCE negotiation sessions in Geneva, starting in September 1973. At the same time, this was the first, and successful, test of the foreign policy cooperation of the EC countries (the so-called European Policy Cooperation, EPC), that is without consulting Washington—thus greatly frustrating Henry Kissinger.<sup>29</sup> In October, during an official visit to the Soviet Union, Danish prime minister Anker Jørgensen seized the opportunity to make it clear to the Soviet leaders that Denmark firmly intended to place human rights principles and freer movement of people and information at the center of the CSCE agreements to be negotiated in Geneva.<sup>30</sup>

Danish coordinating activities on Basket III issues continued into 1974. At the same time, Denmark tabled its own draft for the introductory text of the important section on human contacts and on family visits. The relevant text of the Final Act, agreed upon at the “third stage” CSCE

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<sup>27</sup> FMA, 5.B.55.11. DANATO Bryssel, reptel 275a, April 16, 1973 [declass. June 2012].

<sup>28</sup> FMA, box 45, 5.B.55.a., “Notat. Foreløbig vurdering af MPT’s forløb og dets resultater,” June 12, 1973; *ibid.*, box 58, 5.B.55.11. “CSCE/I/6, Helsinki July 5, 1973: Proposal Submitted by the Danish Delegation.”

<sup>29</sup> Romano, “The Main Task”; on Kissinger’s frustrations with Danish Foreign Minister K.B. Andersen’s presentation of the positions of the EC countries on CSCE to him, see Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 701ff.

<sup>30</sup> FMA, box 58, 5.B.55.11, “Referat af drøft. med minist.præs. Kosygin,” October 1973.

meeting (for heads of states) in Helsinki in 1975, essentially reflected the original Danish draft. The same may be said of the Danish draft for Basket IV of the Final Act, namely on the follow-up mechanisms of the Helsinki conference, which became a second CSCE “flagship” for the Danes. Even here, Denmark assumed the role as Western coordinator of country positions—a somewhat thankless role, since major NATO powers including France, the UK, and the United States wanted to limit any organized political follow-up as much as possible. By contrast, from the outset Denmark—supported by Norway and West Germany—took a much more open approach by suggesting a high-level conference for government officials be convened after an interim period (approximately two years). This indeed became the end result, thus sidestepping the Eastern Bloc preference for a permanent political machinery, which in turn could be used as a tool to push for a regional European security system to marginalize NATO and weaken North American defense commitments to Western Europe.<sup>31</sup>

It is important to note that among the thirty-four participating countries in Helsinki and Geneva, Denmark was in a unique position, since it was represented in all four of the forums of the Western participating states: the Nordic countries, and via Sweden and Finland also some of the N+N (Neutral and Non-Aligned) countries; the EC countries; and the NATO countries. This position strengthened Danish influence during the multilateral negotiations on the wording of the Helsinki Final Act, and enabled Danish negotiators to keep in continual contact with all parties involved. Also, in contrast to other NATO allies, the basic Danish attitude remained flexible and non-confrontational. Around mid-1974, when negotiations on Basket III issues were stalling in part because of Eastern Bloc reluctance on specific points, Denmark disputed the U.S. approach of rejecting further Western concessions even if it would seriously postpone or jeopardize the negotiation schedule. The Danes argued in the NATO Council that such an approach would hardly be understood by the neutral countries, also because some progress had indeed been achieved. In late 1974 Denmark, along with Norway, contributed further text compromises in Geneva on behalf of the EC countries, and by early 1975 an almost finalized

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<sup>31</sup> Mellbin, *Konferencen om Sikkerhed*, 42f., 73, 93, 109f.; FMA, box 46, *ibid.*, “Notat: CSCE fase 2: Status-rapport og vurdering,” December 19, 1973; Taschler, Hilfrich et al. AAPBD. Dok. 90. Scheel an Bahr, March 15, 1974, 368ff.; FMA, box. 47, 55.B.55/10. “Notat: CSCE: Overvejelser vedr. forhandl.s nuvær. status,” January 20, 1975; FMA, box 48, 5.B.55.a/2. “CSCE-del til UM,” May 5, 1975.

Basket III text was agreed upon.<sup>32</sup> Last minute attempts in May 1975 by the Soviet delegation to dilute the Basket III text were thwarted by the heads of delegations from the United States, Italy, Denmark, and Norway, working in close coordination.<sup>33</sup>

### **From Belgrade to TNF, 1977–1979: Ensuring the Survival of Détente**

Shortly after the third stage of the CSCE in Helsinki in July–August 1975, and pursuant to the importance attached by Denmark to the continuation and continuity of a long-term European détente process with wider implications than just a relaxation of international tensions, the Danish government established an interministerial committee of relevant government and agency officials to monitor and report on Denmark's own implementation of the Helsinki Final Act provisions. However, apart from the successful establishment of an 'International Press Center' for foreign (including East European) journalists in Copenhagen in late 1977, initiated and partly run by the Danish Foreign Ministry, Danish efforts to implement the Final Act and Basket III in particular focused on the CSCE follow-up meetings in Belgrade in 1977–78, and in 1980–83 in Madrid.

A major recurring Danish concern prior to and during the Belgrade meeting (October 1977–March 1978), although only confidentially expressed, was that the zeal with which the new Carter administration in Washington appeared determined to promote human rights worldwide could lead to unnecessary confrontations in Belgrade to the detriment of détente. This might even contribute to a return to an international Cold War climate, which in turn would impede progress for human rights in the Eastern Bloc. Belgrade should not be a "tribunal," Danish foreign minister K. B. Andersen warned; violations of human rights and of the Helsinki Final Acts provisions in the Soviet Bloc should be met with clear but constructive criticism, not with harsh rhetoric or polemics that might be coun-

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<sup>32</sup> Taschler, Hilfrich et al. AAPBD. Dok. 304. "Boss (NATO) an AA," October. 18, 1974, 303ff.; FMA, box. 47, 55.B.55/10. "Notat: CSCE: Overvejelser vedr. forhandl.s nuvæ. status," January 20, 1975; *ibid.*, box 48, 5.B.55.a/1. "Notat, fase 2: Statusrapport og vurdering," July 30, 1974; *ibid.*, 5.B.55/10. "CSCE-del to UM," September 26, 1974; *ibid.*, 5.B.55.12. "CSCE fase 2: Konf.s opfølgning, nr. 350, Oct 25, 1974 + nr. 353, Oct. 30, 1974"; *ibid.*, 5.B.55.b.1. "CSCE-del to UM, fase 2: Komité III, nr. 373," November 15, 1974; *ibid.*, "Notat, 'CSCE fase 2: Statusrapport efter fjerde møde,'" December 20, 1974.

<sup>33</sup> Kieninger, "Transformation versus Status Quo," 499n502.

terproductive. Less than two months after the inauguration of President Jimmy Carter, Andersen received support from the nine EC countries to urge British foreign minister James Callaghan to convey this message to the U.S. president during his upcoming visit to Washington. At the same time, in April 1977, Danish government officials stressed identical views in consultations with Soviet officials. And at the NATO ministerial meeting in May 1977, and repeated during a visit to the United States in February 1978, Danish prime minister Anker Jørgensen explicitly conveyed the same points personally to President Carter. By June 1977, there appeared to be consensus on this position even in the NATO Council.<sup>34</sup>

However, there were indications that the Belgrade meeting might end up as a “tribunal” for sharp public condemnations of Soviet human rights violations. Anticipating such an unwanted outcome, K. B. Andersen asked for a conversation with Arthur Goldberg, the U.S. delegation chief in Belgrade, during their stay at the U.N. General Assembly a few days before the opening of the meeting in Belgrade. Andersen stressed what would become the two recurring points in Danish CSCE diplomacy during the late 1970s and the early 1980s: (1) that the Belgrade meeting should be a continuation of détente, not the end of détente; and (2) that justified criticism of Eastern Bloc human rights violations should therefore be held at a general and nonpolemical level. Andersen’s second point was that the West should not lay down a human rights concept that did not sufficiently consider economic and social aspects, parallel to individual and political rights. Otherwise, the West might lose credibility in the eyes of important third world countries which would be unable to understand why the West insisted upon the latter rights only. However, Goldberg showed little appreciation for Andersen’s positions, leaving him to report back to Danish parliamentarians that Goldberg had been “just as direct and tough as feared.”<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> FMA, “K.B. Andersen’s and Anker Jørgensen’s statements to the FPC,” March 17, April 21, June 3, July 1, October 7, 1977, and March 2, 1978; *ibid.*, box 49, 5.B.55.a.2. “Notits: Mødet i UPN 17. Marts 1977: Msk.rett.sp.mål/CSCE,” March 15, 1977; *ibid.*, box 50, 5.B.55/10. “Referat. CSCE-konsultationer med Sovjetunionen,” April 27, 1977; FMA, 5.B.55.a. “Uformelt rådsmødet 30. juni 1977. Behandl. af msk.rett.sp.målet i Beograd, nr. UM 1177,” July 5, 1977, [declass. June 2012].

<sup>35</sup> FMA. Box 50, 5.B.55/10. Danmission New York mstel 688, Sept 27, 1977, “CSCE: Samtale ml UM og Amb Goldberg”; NATO Archives. FPC, Oct 7, 1977, *ibid.* The Danish appeal for Western inclusion of economic and social rights in a “broad concept of human rights” was also underlined by Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen and K.B. Andersen in the NATO Council C-VR(77)22, part II, May 10 and part III, May 11, 1977; and

As the Danes anticipated, the opening sessions of the Belgrade follow-up meeting in the fall of 1977 resulted in little progress. Around January 1978, after due consultations within the nine EC countries and NATO, Denmark proposed a text on the humanitarian aspects of the CSCE process to be included in the final comprehensive Belgrade document, while carefully aiming to preserve the balance between the three Baskets of the Helsinki Final Act. Yet the Soviet side rejected the proposal, as well as other elements of Danish interest, including dissemination of information, enhanced working conditions for journalists, and military confidence-building measures.<sup>36</sup>

As it turned out, no comprehensive or balanced final document would be agreed on in Belgrade—in particular due to wide differences between the declared (maximalist) positions on human rights issues of the U.S. and the Soviet delegations, led by Arthur Goldberg and Yuri Vorontsov, respectively. It was here that the Danish delegation (in its chairmanship capacity of the nine EC countries during the first half of 1978) came to play a mediating role. Ambassador Mellbin, head of the Danish delegation, brought Goldberg and Vorontsov together privately to sound out options for a compromise to avoid a breakdown with ominous implications for the CSCE process as a whole. After further discussions, Goldberg came to Mellbin with the idea that the United States, the Soviet Union, and the EC should agree on a text tabled by the EC chairmanship. The text would be void of any specific substance, but contain the essentials: provisions establishing the importance of continued East-West détente and implementation of the Final Act, and establishing time and place for the next follow-up meeting—in Madrid, in November 1980.

Thus, the CSCE process would be kept alive and pursued further. The scheme was gradually accepted by all parties, and what became known as the Danish proposal for a final text was basically agreed on and signed in Belgrade in early March 1978. Subsequently, Foreign Minister K. B. Andersen could report that Danish efforts at Belgrade had been lauded explicitly by Finland as well as by several NATO and EC countries.<sup>37</sup>

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also in Minister Lise Østergaard's presentation on the results of the Belgrade meeting in the Danish Parliament, *Folketingets Forhandlingar 1977–78*, April 6, 1978, as well as by Foreign Minister Kjeld Olesen in his opening statement at the CSCE follow-up meeting in Madrid, November 13, 1980 (*Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Årbog*, 205–8).

<sup>36</sup> FMA, box 51, 5.B.55/10. "Beograd-mødet 1977: Red.arb. vedr. sikkerhed i Europa: principdeklar., Nr. 15," January 30, 1978.

<sup>37</sup> Mellbin, *Beograd-mødet*, 53f.; Mellbin, "Appendix: From Helsinki," 249 ff.; FMA, FPC, April 11, 1978.

As is well-known, the Madrid follow-up meeting (1980–83) would take place in a very different international situation. The deteriorating East-West relations in 1978–79, exacerbated in December 1979 by the NATO “double-track” decision on tactical nuclear missiles in Western Europe (TNF) and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, cast gloomy shadows over the continuation of the CSCE process in the 1980s. The return to a much tougher Cold War international climate, feared and warned against by the Danes since early 1977, seemed to materialize.

The TNF issue and other issues of U.S. and NATO nuclear strategy in the early 1980s created a serious split in Danish political life throughout most of the decade concerning the formulation of Danish security policy.<sup>38</sup> By contrast, there had been general political consensus and focus in Denmark on the “Harmel formula” since 1967—and even before. The notion that NATO should have the twin purpose of pursuing both military deterrence and diplomatic détente had in effect been a Danish key issue ever since the early 1950s, across the political spectrum: NATO’s threat analyses should not be based on Soviet military capacities only, but also on analyses of probable Soviet political intentions; NATO should not leave the initiative to the Soviet side by rejecting any disarmament or détente proposal from the East out-of-hand; and NATO should act proactively by putting forward realistic disarmament proposals of its own.<sup>39</sup>

This was also precisely the message of the Danish representative in NATO’s Permanent Council in January 1977, when newly elected U.S. vice president Walter Mondale visited NATO in Brussels.<sup>40</sup> At virtually every NATO ministerial meeting throughout the 1970s, Danish (and Norwegian) ministers explicitly highlighted the “Harmel formula.” In the same spirit, Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen insisted at the NATO Council Meeting in May 1977 that he “would not like to see NATO defense planning narrowly as a military response to Eastern military potential. Account should also be taken of results of comprehensive political analysis.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> During most of the 1980s, the Danish center-left opposition parties, forming a parliamentary majority on security and defense policy issues, were heavily influenced by the Western European movements for nuclear disarmament, and the parliamentary opposition imposed some of these antinuclear policies on the Danish center-right government, much to the dismay of conservative-liberal circles in Denmark at the time.

<sup>39</sup> See Villaume, *Allieret med forbehold*, 167, 443, 789, 816–19, 836ff., 845; cf. Villaume, “Neither Appeasement nor Servility,” 157–61.

<sup>40</sup> Atlanta, GA, Jimmy Carter Library, CREST: NLC-133-121-1-40-4. “US Mission NATO to SecState,” January 24, 1977.

<sup>41</sup> NATO Archives. C-VR(77)22, part II, May 10, 1977.

Such considerations were also behind the dissent of the Danish Social Democratic government toward NATO's landmark "double-track" decision in December 1979. While many NATO loyalists, including the conservative-liberal Danish parliamentary opposition, regarded the NATO decision with its combination of rearmament and invitation to negotiations as a "perfect Harmel," most Danish Social Democrats and center-left politicians disagreed, partly under the impression of the newly mobilized popular anti-nuclear weapons movements—and some senior Western arms control experts. Hence, Denmark proposed a six-month postponement of the TNF decision to allow for serious attempts at reaching a negotiated solution with the Soviets over the TNF issue. Although the Danish proposal was turned down in the NATO Council, the Social Democratic and center-left parties insisted, during the following years, on gradually radicalized criticisms of nuclear programs and strategies in both East and West. The conservative-liberal parties, by contrast, accused the political center-left of harming NATO solidarity, but since the center-left parties constituted a Parliamentary majority on security policy issues even under the conservative-liberal governments from 1982 on, Denmark had, in effect, two conflicting nuclear weapons policies until 1988.<sup>42</sup>

### **CSCE from Madrid to Paris, 1980–1989: Tug Boats Towing along the Tankers**

It is significant that Denmark's détente policies in the CSCE framework were hardly affected by the domestic political strife and polemics over Danish nuclear policies during the 1980s. Continuity, rather than rupture, characterized the Danish profile at the CSCE meetings from Madrid (1980–83) and Stockholm (1984–86) to Vienna (1986–89) and Paris (1989). Thus, while the Social Democratic government sharply and openly criticized the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as an assault against the very foundation of the international community, to be met by Western firmness and solidarity, it also stressed the importance of not overreacting. This was the recurrent Danish formula, as expressed by Foreign Minister Kjeld Olesen in the Danish Parliament in May 1980; new barriers should not be constructed, and Denmark did not want to burn bridges to the So-

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<sup>42</sup> The result, the so-called footnote policy (1982–88), is analyzed in DIIS, *Danmark under den kolde krig*, and in Petersen, "'Footnoting' as a political instrument." For a slightly different interpretation, see Villaume, *Lavvækst og frontdannelser*, 284–305, 329–51.

viet Union, but rather use them. The most important bridge was the CSCE process, which had to continue; East-West dialogue had to go on, since there was no realistic alternative to détente.<sup>43</sup>

Certainly, not all NATO allies agreed with the Danish position. The following month in the NATO Council, Kjeld Olesen felt it necessary to stress that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan should be met primarily with political and economic counter-measures, and less with military punishment; NATO should not focus too much on the three percent annual growth in defense budgets as stipulated by NATO in 1978 (which Denmark had relinquished anyway). By December 1980, the U.S. representative in NATO admitted that prior to the opening of the CSCE follow-up meeting in Madrid, his country had been skeptical of Soviet intent, expecting them to bring the meeting to a breakdown. The Norwegian representative, siding with Denmark, responded by underscoring the importance of the continuation of the Madrid meeting since the CSCE process forced the Soviet Union to restraint in its foreign policy behavior.<sup>44</sup> Although key officials in the British Foreign Office saw hopeful indications in early 1981 that the political crisis in Poland had helped the Danes "to get their devotion to the pursuit of détente into a more realistic focus," no such signs were visible 10 months later when top officials from the British and Danish foreign ministries met in London. While the Danes insisted that even if there were no progress at Madrid, it was "essential" to agree on a date and place for the next CSCE meeting, "thereby keeping the CSCE process alive," the British saw "no point in . . . interminable disarmament conferences" nor in a CSCE process that was "institutionalized and continued indefinitely."<sup>45</sup>

Even Danish ministers were finding dialogue with the Eastern Bloc difficult at this point. During bilateral meetings in late 1981, Anker Jørgensen and Kjeld Olesen sharply criticized their Hungarian and Bulgarian counterparts for their excessive "anti-U.S. demagogy" while making little useful contribution to East-West dialogue. Annoyed, Olesen told the Bul-

<sup>43</sup> *Folketingets Forhandlinger 1979–80*, May 22, 1980, col. 9892ff.

<sup>44</sup> Geiger, Gupta et al. AAPBD, vol. 1. Pauls an AA, June 25, 1980, Nr. 190, 1001–1003; *ibid.*, vol. 2. Wieck an AA, December 12, 1980, Nr. 364, 1882 ff.

<sup>45</sup> UKNA, FCO 33/4661, "Denmark 1980," January 30, 1981; *ibid.*, FCO 33/4677. "Visit by Danish Parl. Under-Sec. Eigil Jørgensen: Nov. 18–20, 1981, Record of Talks in Sir Mich. Palliser's Office, Nov 19." For an account from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the differences of opinion between the United States and most European countries at the CSCE meeting in Madrid in 1980–81, see *Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Årbog 1981*, 20–23.



garians that small countries should use their influence: Bulgarians should be critical of Soviet policies, just as the Danes spoke critically of U.S. policies.<sup>46</sup>

CSCE proceedings turned even more difficult after the Polish government imposed Martial Law in December 1981. Luckily, according to the Danes, just two days before the Polish crackdown, the N+N countries had tabled a compromise proposal in Madrid for the final document from the meeting, containing important provisions on political self-determination, freer flow of information and human contacts, and trade union rights. Notwithstanding, in early 1982 in Madrid, the United States was pressing for an immediate termination of the meeting as a response to events in Poland, despite opposition from West Europeans, primarily West Germany and Denmark. In an attempt to counter the U.S. position, Kjeld Olesen and his West German counterpart, Dietrich Genscher, agreed to at least ensure an agreement on the next CSCE meeting, thus keeping the détente process alive. Despite Danish opposition, it was then agreed that the Madrid meeting would be suspended until November 1982.<sup>47</sup> In the meantime, Denmark again came to play a coordinating role at a CSCE meeting by virtue of her six months' Chairmanship of the EC. By November 1982 all ten EC countries had come to support what the Danish delegation called a "beefed-up" version of the NNA proposal, which was then tabled by Denmark in Madrid, and essentially agreed upon.<sup>48</sup>

The change of government in Denmark in September 1982 under the new leadership of conservative prime minister Poul Schlüter and liberal foreign minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen had little to no influence on Danish CSCE policies. In early 1983, NATO's "hardliner" countries in Madrid, primarily the United States, but also the Netherlands and the UK, insisted confidentially on several sensitive (maximalist) changes in the human rights sections of the proposal by the N+N countries, although they had all been rejected previously by the Eastern side. In contrast, the Danish position remained convinced, according to Ellemann-Jensen, that changes to the N+N countries' draft text should be reduced to a minimum in order to reach a conclusion within a reasonable time. It was also gener-

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<sup>46</sup> UKNA, FCO 33/4668, "BritEmb Cph to FCO, Visit of Hungarian PM to Denmark, Sept 29–30," October 6, 1981; *ibid.*, "Longworth, Sofia to FCO, Bulgaria: Visit of Danish For.Min.," October 27, 1981; *ibid.*, "BritEmb Sofia to FCO, Visit of Danish For.Min.," November 2, 1981.

<sup>47</sup> FMA, "Kjeld Olesen reporting to FPC," January 21, February 25, and April 2, 1982.

<sup>48</sup> FMA, FPC, November 11, 1982; *Madrid-mødet*, 17 f.; author's interview with Harris Nielsen. On the Madrid meeting in general, see also Fischer, *Keeping the Process Alive*.

ally felt that there was no reason to believe that the Eastern side would accept all Western demands on human rights issues.<sup>49</sup>

The final phase of the Madrid meeting in September 1983 was overshadowed by the Soviet shooting down of a South Korean airliner in Soviet air territory. Foreign ministers of Western and N+N countries strongly condemned the incident in their presentations in Madrid, but Ellemann-Jensen added (along with criticism of Afghanistan and Poland) that the tragedy was evidence of the need to seek new methods of enhancing CSBM between East and West. Taking stock after the Madrid meeting, Ellemann-Jensen noted that although the Eastern side had focused on military aspects, the West had succeeded in securing progress for humanitarian aspects, including human rights, that is, traditional Danish key issues in the CSCE process. From a Danish perspective it was significant (according to Ellemann-Jensen), that the successful conclusion of the Madrid meeting had shown not only that all countries, big and small, could remain in dialogue on issues vital to them, but that it was also possible to use the multilateral CSCE forum at a time when it was difficult—often with good reason—to maintain dialogue on a bilateral level.<sup>50</sup> In other words, the CSCE process continued to serve both as an East-West bridge in Europe even when dialogue between the two superpowers suffered, and as a useful forum for small state influence on international relations.

These points were brought home even more strikingly at the opening sessions of the ensuing CSCE meeting agreed upon in Madrid, namely the Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE) and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM) in Stockholm in January 1984. Ellemann-Jensen used the occasion to have a range of dialogue sessions with other smaller countries in East and West and the N+N, stressing that it was crucial to maintain the balance between the military and humanitarian dimensions of the CSCE process, even at the planned next CSCE meeting in Vienna in 1986. The CDE meeting in Stockholm was particularly important, Ellemann-Jensen reported subsequently, because it contributed to recreating lost confidence between East and West in Europe. Although not

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<sup>49</sup> FMA. "Ellemann-Jensen reporting to FPC," May 6, 1983.

<sup>50</sup> *Madrid-mødet*, 21 f.; FMA. "Ellemann-Jensen reporting to FPC," September 16, 1983. Six weeks later, at the very height of East-West tensions in the early 1980s, and causing some consternation in NATO circles, Ellemann-Jensen accepted a surprising official Soviet invitation to visit Moscow. Here, the Danish foreign minister criticized Soviet military build-up and raised the sensitive issue of family reunions; his main message, however, was the need of continued dialogue and mutual trust between East and West (Petersen: *Europæisk og globalt engagement*, 248 f.).

originally planned, West German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher proposed that the Stockholm meeting be opened at the level of foreign ministers. This was immediately supported by Denmark, and gradually by most of the ten EC countries, thus underlining the increasing degree to which the European foreign policy cooperation (EPC) was able to influence the development of East-West relations.

Most important, the Stockholm meeting was an excellent opportunity for comprehensive mutual East-West contacts and created new dynamics in East-West relations. It was the general impression in Stockholm that President Ronald Reagan's remarkably conciliatory televised speech on East-West relations on the eve of the opening of the conference had contributed to a constructive atmosphere, and blazed the trail for seemingly positive conversations in Stockholm between the U.S. and Soviet foreign ministers, George Shultz and Andrei Gromyko. Furthermore, on the basis of his own conversations in Stockholm with Gromyko and other foreign ministers from Eastern Europe, Ellemann-Jensen concluded that Gromyko had been directly influenced by requests from the East European countries to go to Stockholm—much the same way as the United States had been influenced by the attitudes of West European countries. As the Yugoslav foreign minister Lazar Mojsov told Ellemann-Jensen: The Soviet Union is a big tanker which needs some tug boats to adjust its course, and smaller countries in East and West should contribute to facilitate large ships to be towed along.<sup>51</sup>

Such "towing along" was also at play, presumably, during the preparation of a major NATO analysis of East-West relations in the spring of 1984; the main Danish input to the analysis was to underline, once again, the "Harmel formula" (NATO's dual task of deterrence and détente), thus helping to create what the Danes termed a "robust basis for the policy of détente": the CSCE process should be made more resistant against any future setbacks in East-West relations.<sup>52</sup>

Military aspects, including prior notification of military exercises, dominated the agenda of the Stockholm conference, leaving the main part of Western coordination to the NATO forum where the major powers played a dominant role. Yet Denmark did play an active role especially in negotiations over the reconfirmation of the Helsinki Final Act principle of refraining from the use of force. Such a reconfirmation was strongly de-

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<sup>51</sup> Ellemann-Jensen reporting to the FPC, February 17, 1984.

<sup>52</sup> *Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Årbog 1984*, 12ff. The analysis was adopted at the NATO Council meeting in Washington in May 1984.

manded by the Eastern bloc, but several NATO countries were opposed to Western acceptance, partly because they did not want the Stockholm document to be merely declaratory, and partly to use Western acceptance as a bargaining chip. The Danes, however, rejected such concerns from the outset and pressed for an acceptable formulation of the principle which was evidently in the interest of the West. They were successful in their arguments. Once again, Denmark's negotiating position in the CSCE forum was strengthened through continued consultations with the Nordic countries in Stockholm, which served to communicate and mediate information and attitudes between NATO (and EC) countries and the N+N countries.<sup>53</sup>

The Danes had reason to be satisfied with the political-military CSBM of the Stockholm final document (September 1986), given Denmark's exposed geostrategic position close to the East-West divide at the Baltic Sea. Yet the Danish government was increasingly concerned that the humanitarian dimensions of the CSCE process, a traditionally Danish key issue, were being downplayed, not least in view of the insufficient Eastern fulfillment of the Basket III provisions of the Helsinki Final Act.<sup>54</sup> Uffe Ellemann-Jensen stressed that the most important purpose of the next CSCE follow-up meeting, opening in Vienna in November 1986, was to ensure such fulfillment. However, he also emphasized that this should be done in Vienna in "a serious and sober way," without "playing to the gallery or creating polemics," which could only make matters worse. The Vienna Conference should not be retrospective, but forward-looking in order to improve conditions. Nevertheless, treatment of human rights issues at the CSCE expert meetings in Budapest, Ottawa, and Bern (1984–86) on human and cultural contacts had been neglected, according to Ellemann-Jensen; therefore, the Danish Foreign Minister now proposed holding a separate CSCE meeting on human rights and the humanitarian dimensions (CHD) immediately after the Vienna Conference—preferably in Copenhagen.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Mellbin, *Stockholm-konferencen*, 34ff.; FMA. "Ellemann-Jensen reporting to the FPC," July 5, 1985.

<sup>54</sup> FMA, 5.B.55.11. See, for example, Danato Bryssel, reptel 417, May 15, 1985; *ibid.*, "Notits til P.IV. Halvårsberetn. Om Warsz.pagtlan.s virkeliggør. af Helsingfors-slutakten," September 20, 1985; *ibid.*, do., Amb Sofia, Amtel 115, September 26, 1985 (all declass. June 11, 2012).

<sup>55</sup> FMA. "Ellemann-Jensen reporting to the FPC," October 10 and November 5, 1986. The political center-left parties raised some concern that such a conference—in Copenhagen at that—might lead to "negative vibrations" to the detriment of military détente in Europe; yet, they were not opposed to Ellemann-Jensen's idea (*ibid.*).

Ellemann-Jensen's proposal in Vienna for such a CHD meeting was subsequently rivaled by a Soviet proposal for a separate CHD meeting in Moscow, which, however, did not explicitly include human rights, as well as by a Dutch CHD proposal. Ellemann-Jensen maintained the Danish CHD proposal, pointing out that the Danes had taken the initiative on this idea.<sup>56</sup>

Another Danish initiative in the mid-1980s to promote human contacts between East and West was apparently born in the Danish Foreign Ministry, partly with inspiration from similar initiatives in Norway and Sweden: the establishment, in February 1985, of a consultative contact group with representatives of the Foreign Ministry and major Danish nongovernmental organizations, including the National Association of trade unions (Landsorganisationen, LO), the Employers' Association (DA), Danish Youth Forum (DUF), the UN Association (FN-Forbundet), Amnesty International, PEN, and various church organizations. The mandate of the contact group, initially set up to discuss issues at the upcoming CSCE expert meeting on human rights in Ottawa, was to exchange ideas, viewpoints and information, and to ensure that the positions of the Danish delegation had the support of relevant popular NGOs and nonstate actors. Another similar consultative contact group was set up in 1986 in connection with the CSCE expert meeting in Bern on human contacts, and its work continued during the Vienna Meeting from 1986 on. Via the contact groups, led by the head of the Danish expert delegations, the NGOs were drawn into the Danish CSCE policy-making process. Danish proposals (at Bern and Vienna) included transnational cooperation between NGOs to promote human contacts, for example via mutual trade union visits, family reunions, twin towns, expansion of the interrail system.<sup>57</sup>

The end result of the Vienna meeting (in January 1989) was agreement on no less than three separate CHD conferences—in Paris (1989), Copenhagen (1990), and Moscow (1991). The Vienna final document itself signified further progress for the humanitarian dimension; for instance, a Danish draft constituted the basis of text sections on enhanced monitoring of compliance with the human rights provisions of the Final Act. In his address at the closing session of the Vienna meeting, Ellemann-Jensen

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<sup>56</sup> FMA, "Ellemann-Jensen reporting to the FPC," December 2, 1986.

<sup>57</sup> I am indebted to Associate Professor Marianne Rostgaard, Aalborg University, for bringing this aspect of official Danish CSCE policies to my attention. Documentation on this is to be found in files 5.B.55/43, FMA, and in the Archives of the Danish Youth Forum (DUF), DSA. For the Norwegian parallel, see Mevik, *Sikkerhet i samarbeid*, 87f.

illustrated the significance of the CSCE process for current developments in Europe by comparing the process to a door that, once opened, could not be closed again.<sup>58</sup>

Indeed, in order to underscore the continuity and coherence of the CSCE process at this stage, French foreign minister Roland Dumas invited both Ellemann-Jensen and Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze to the opening of the first of the three consecutive CHD meetings in Paris in late May 1989. Here, only Romania did not accept the CHD mechanism, while Shevardnadze's address "could almost have been delivered by a Western foreign minister."<sup>59</sup> Five months later, even the "door" in the Berlin Wall had been opened.

### **Conclusion: Helping to Blaze the Trail**

It goes without saying that the realization of the European security conference by 1973, and the preservation of the ensuing CSCE and European détente process throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, were the result of complex political and diplomatic efforts by all participating states, and that small NATO states such as Denmark played a limited role in this process. To this end, more comparative research is needed on the CSCE policies of the small NATO states in particular.

Nevertheless, Danish foreign policy decision-makers and government officials played a not insignificant role in the European détente process, ranging from helping to mobilize NATO support of the European security conference idea in the late 1960s; to ensuring the significant human dimensions of the Helsinki Final Act; and to actively helping to keep the CSCE process alive during the late 1970s and the early 1980s, despite intensified international East-West tension and Cold War rhetoric in both East and West, and despite anti-détente inclinations of major NATO allies. Thus, Denmark, along with NATO allies such as West Germany and Norway, contributed to what may be termed the process of "long détente" in Europe from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s.

Five Danish foreign ministers and their governments over this period—Social Democrats and Liberals alike—from Per Hækkerup, Poul Hartling, and K. B. Andersen to Kjeld Olesen and Uffe Ellemann-Jensen,

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<sup>58</sup> FMA, "Ellemann-Jensen reporting to the FPC," January 24, 1989; Udenrigsministeriet, *Wien-mødet*, 19–33, 156–61.

<sup>59</sup> FMA, "Ellemann-Jensen reporting to the FPC," June 7, 1989.

nurtured shared visions of European détente, rooted in concepts of the special role of a democratic NATO allied small state such as Denmark in a world dominated by great powers and even superpowers.

First, a small state may play an important mediating role between the great powers, not least because it cannot reasonably be suspected of acting for reasons of selfish power politics or other ulterior motives.

Second, any meaningful European détente had to be based on a new concept of human security, not necessarily opposed to but as a vital supplement to traditional great or superpower policies focusing on nuclear and traditional national security issues. Détente had to be felt in a very concrete way for ordinary people in East and West. Hence, eventually even NGOs would be included in the détente policy-making process, both at the national and the transnational level.

Third, multilateral diplomacy was an essential instrument for the small state in this endeavor. Whereas Henry Kissinger regarded the “endless” CSCE negotiation rounds in the 1970s as “multilateral diplomacy run amok,”<sup>60</sup> the Danes saw the CSCE forum as an important avenue of international influence, not least because Denmark, anchored in NATO and (from 1972/73) in the EC, as well as in Nordic cooperation, was able to consult and communicate with both NNA countries and the smaller Eastern bloc countries.

Fourth, European détente and democratization were linked together. As Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen wrote to President Carter in 1977, the process of détente was, in the last analysis, linked to recent—admittedly limited—progress of human rights not only in Eastern Europe, but had even contributed to the development toward democracy in Portugal and Spain.<sup>61</sup> Thus, détente was not an end in itself. In K. B. Andersen’s words in Helsinki in July 1973, it was a means to achieve aims “far beyond that of reducing tensions.”<sup>62</sup>

All of this is not necessarily to say that Denmark (often along with Norway) pursued what might be termed more “moral” or “idealistic” security and détente policies than those of other NATO states—including the major ones—during the last decades of the Cold War. More to the point, features usually associated with an idealistically oriented foreign policy tended to coincide, more often than not, with Danish Realpolitik-

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<sup>60</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 642.

<sup>61</sup> Jimmy Carter Library, Fld. Denmark, Brzezinski Office File, box 10, NSA 15. “PM Anker Jørgensen to President Jimmy Carter,” April 25, 1977.

<sup>62</sup> Kavass et al., *Human rights, European Politics*, 64.

oriented small state national and regional security interests, as perceived by key Danish decision-makers throughout this period.

In summary, available evidence suggests that the purposeful and proactive—at times even activist—Danish foreign policy strategy and diplomacy during the late 1960s and the 1970s did function, at least at certain junctures, as a catalyst to the larger all-European détente process between East and West in this period. This was probably what Helmut Sonnenfeldt, counselor at the U.S. State Department and Henry Kissinger's closest adviser on European affairs, had in mind in July 1974 during a conversation with the Danish ambassador to the United States. To the ambassador's general statement that Denmark supported détente, Sonnenfeldt immediately responded that Denmark "not only supports détente. You blazed the trail. The U.S. came to it later."<sup>63</sup> Of course, Sonnenfeldt's courteous remark to the Dane may be interpreted as diplomatic decorum. Even so, there was some substance to his words as well.

Thus, Denmark may well be characterized as both a pathfinder and a perpetuator of European détente during the last decades of Cold War. At times this was explicitly appreciated by Denmark's strongest ally, the United States, and could also account for the State Department's 1975 characterization of Denmark as "a sophisticated NATO ally."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> USNA, RG 59, D286 (Records of Helmut Sonnenfeldt), Lot #81, Records of the Office of the Councillor, 1955–77, Box 3. "MemCon Bartels & Sonnenfeldt," July 18, 1974.

<sup>64</sup> Gerald Ford Library, fld Den, box 3, Pres. Ctr. File f. Europe. "Memo for Lt. Scowcroft, White House," January 30, 1975.



# Owercoming the Crisis of Détente, 1979–1983

## Coordinating Eastern Policies between Paris, Bonn, and London

*Christian Wenkel*

At the end of the 1970s and into the early 1980s, Western détente policies appeared to be compromised by the degradation of East-West relations.<sup>1</sup> At this time, many West European leaders and diplomats even stopped using the term “détente.” Especially the European détente process as it had emerged during the first half of the 1970s, largely inspired by French concepts and determined by German aims, seemed doomed to failure after the Belgrade CSCE follow-up meeting in 1977/78.<sup>2</sup> At this time West European diplomats considered the Carter administration to be far too weak and unable to engage in a real dialogue with the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the question arose in Europe and especially in Paris, Bonn, and London of how to preserve détente in general and European détente in particular.

Since 1962/63, French diplomacy tried to initiate a coordination of its Eastern policy with that of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). But the famous Elysée Treaty of January 22, 1963, failed, as far as that very ambition was concerned, as the Bundestag had added a preamble insisting on German special ties with the West and particularly with the United States of America.<sup>4</sup> During the 1970s, a new forum was created for coor-

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is closely linked to the works of a research group dealing with “France between the Cold War and the European Integration, 1974–1986” at the German Historical Institute Paris in cooperation with the RICHIE network. A volume with the results of this project is forthcoming.

<sup>2</sup> Romano, *From Détente in Europe*; Pons and Romero, “Europe between the Superpowers”; Andréani, *Le piège*; Vaïsse, “De Gaulle et Willy Brandt.”

<sup>3</sup> Renouard and Vigil, “The Quest for Leadership”; Ludlow, “The Unnoticed Apogee of Atlanticism?”

<sup>4</sup> Geiger, *Atlantiker gegen Gaullisten*, 210–13; Bange, “English, American, and German“.

minating foreign policy on a European level. The first years of this European Political Cooperation were very much devoted to CSCE issues.<sup>5</sup> The disappointment about the CSCE follow-up meeting in Belgrade in 1977/78 enhanced the interest in this coordination measure in West European government circles.<sup>6</sup> During this same period, other fora of consultation on different levels were inaugurated as well, such as the European Council and the G6/7 summits.<sup>7</sup> And because of its growing political and economic importance, representatives of the FRG also participated in meetings of the so-called Big-Four—together with the political leaders from the United States, Great Britain, and France. The Big Four had been established as an informal forum of the most influential states in the West, in order to discuss the most crucial issues on the international agenda. A visible expression of this attempt at world governance was the Guadeloupe Summit meeting in January 1979, following a French invitation, with the Iranian revolution and the second oil crisis on the agenda.

This meeting took place on the eve of a turning point in international relations, marked at the level of East-West relations by the Euromissile crisis, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the crisis in Poland. Numerous leaders in the West as well as in the East were replaced during these years. And outside the European theatre, the number of regional conflicts increased in the context of an ever more globalized Cold War in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.<sup>8</sup> These political events were accompanied by a worldwide turn to neoliberal economic strategy and a fundamental reorientation of China. Altogether, the international crisis of 1979–83 is of tremendous importance not only for the way the conflict between East and West ended but also for diplomatic and economic practices of the post-Cold War period.<sup>9</sup>

A comparison of the different answers given by the three major governments in Western Europe in the face of the crisis of East-West relations at the time also helps our understanding of the role that European actors played in the last decade of the Cold War. Evidence indicates that détente was conceptualized quite differently in Paris, Bonn, and London due to the different significance of these three countries on the international stage and their different histories and involvement in this process, but also due

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<sup>5</sup> Möckli, *European Foreign Policy*.

<sup>6</sup> Romano, "The European Community."

<sup>7</sup> Mourlon-Druol and Romero, *International Summitry and Global Governance*.

<sup>8</sup> Westad, *The Global Cold War*.

<sup>9</sup> Migani and Wenkel, "1979–1981."

to their unequal distance to the Iron Curtain. Nevertheless, they had a common interest as they all had to face the Afghanistan war, the crisis in Poland, and not least the Euromissile crisis while lacking strong American leadership prior to the election of Ronald Reagan on November 4, 1980.

First, this chapter focuses on the Franco-German competition concerning the leadership in Ostpolitik at the end of the 1970s. Its next focus is the growing convergence and coordination efforts with regard to the relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe between Paris, Bonn, and London at the very beginning of the 1980s. And a third theme is the French endeavor to revive the idea of a joint Franco-German Ostpolitik in 1982/83. Although each of these three governments maintained its very own concept for improving East-West relations, as for example following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, there was nevertheless a certain convergence: facing the Polish crisis they shared a specific interest in stable commercial and economic relations between East and West. Furthermore, the lack of American initiatives and leadership forced them to coordinate their policies. The way in which they dealt with the crisis of détente in Europe and especially the European détente process in the late 1970s and early 1980s therefore provides important clues about how European integration contributed to the end of the ideological conflict at the end of the 1980s and about how the Cold War came to its end in Europe.

As French foreign policy makers were particularly aiming for a European position on détente policies distinct from American approaches, French diplomacy took centerstage in most bi- or trilateral efforts to revive European détente. The chapter, although based on archival research in France, Great Britain, Germany, and the United States, focuses on French views and strategies.

### **Franco-German Competition for Closest Relations with Moscow**

The year 1979 can be considered to be a peak of the special relationship between Paris and Moscow since the beginnings of the French policy of “entente, détente et coopération” initiated by Charles de Gaulle in the mid-1960s. After a little disgruntlement following Leonid Brezhnev’s privileged trip to Bonn in 1976 prior to his 1977 visit to Paris Franco-Soviet relations were warming up again during the summer of 1978.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Archives nationales de France (French National Archives, hereafter AnF), 5AG3, 1093, memo for Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, October 26, 1978.

This evolution culminated with the Moscow visit of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in April 1979: eight hours of conversation between the two statesmen in an atmosphere described by French diplomats as very frank and cordial.<sup>11</sup> The Soviets focused on the economic level of the relationship, desiring a successful outcome and presentable results in this field. Conditions were particularly favorable as the tripling of trade decided in 1975 seemed now to be realistic. The main French objective was to prevent the expected end of the Brezhnev era: "At this moment, we are in a relatively strong position but on the other hand we should take advantage of the dusk of Mr. Brezhnev in order to lash down the Franco-Soviet relationship as firmly as possible."<sup>12</sup> Giscard favored an amelioration of the liaisons between the Kremlin and the Elysée. In order to maintain the high level of Franco-Soviet relations, an agreement on regular and frequent consultations, especially in times of crisis, was signed in Moscow. Another French objective of this meeting was to make the Soviets accept the proposition of a conference on disarmament in Europe.<sup>13</sup> But at the end of his visit, Giscard d'Estaing could only conclude that France had to make some progress on this issue. Still, the visit was considered by French diplomats as the beginning of a new era in bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. In addition, it helped France to improve its status on the international stage. The deterioration in international relations since the beginning of 1979 provided once again further significance to the Franco-Soviet relationship.

But since 1969, France was no longer the only West European country to have a successful Ostpolitik. During the 1970s, the competition with the FRG in this field was growing: "[T]he main problem for us in the upcoming years will be that of our attitude concerning the advanced intimacy between the Soviet Union and the FRG."<sup>14</sup> While German and French Ostpolitik used similar instruments—the bilateral approach, the travel diplomacy and the attempt of economic penetration—the difference

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, memo for the Council of Ministers, May 2, 1979.

<sup>12</sup> AnF, 5AG3, 1094. Memo for Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, March 26, 1979; original quotation: "Nous sommes en ce moment dans une position de force relative mais d'autre part nous avons intérêt à profiter du crépuscule de M. Brejnev pour amarrer aussi solidement que possible les relations franco-soviétiques."

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, memo for Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, April 24, 1979.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, memo of the Directeur d'Europe, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 2, 1979; original quotation: "[L]e problème principal qui pour nous se posera dans les années à venir est celui posé par notre attitude face au développement très probable d'une intimité plus poussée entre l'Union soviétique et la RFA."

in motives should not be underestimated.<sup>15</sup> The diplomatic advisers to President Giscard were convinced that for Bonn, Ostpolitik was above all geared toward obtaining practical improvements in intra-German relations. Therefore, they considered the approach of the FRG as a national one only. And precisely for this reason they were very skeptical about any rapprochement between Bonn and Moscow. At the end of the 1970s, the appraisal in Paris of German Ostpolitik was still extremely ambiguous. On the one hand, any success was welcomed—as French diplomacy had reputedly paved the way; on the other hand, French diplomats continued to be suspicious about the way the FRG succeeded in enhancing its presence in Eastern Europe within only a few years by creating a sort of economic dependency in this part of Europe (often to the disadvantage of the French economy): “In Eastern Europe, the FRG creates herself step-by-step a kind of clientele, especially in those countries where her presence and her influence were formerly important, that is reminiscent of the clientele the Wilhelminian Germany had in *Mitteleuropa*. In any case, an accelerating rhythm of [high level] contacts can be observed.”<sup>16</sup> That Brezhnev was pronouncing a sort of elegy of the West German partner during his visit to the FRG in 1978 displeased French diplomats and Giscard himself. Hence, one of their motives to preserve good relations with the Soviet Union was to block a deal between Bonn and Moscow which could have been to the detriment of French influence in the region.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Bonn seemed to be in a better position than Paris to deal with Moscow for several reasons: first, West German politicians were much more careful as far as human rights issues were concerned;<sup>18</sup> second, the FRG was not selling arms to China; and third, Bonn was looking for a military détente.<sup>19</sup> Therefore it appeared as a growing necessity to French diplomacy to foster the European framing of the FRG and especially its Ostpolitik. This concept was also crucial for Giscard’s political line during his trip to

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<sup>15</sup> Niedhart, “Partnerschaft und Konkurrenz; Rey”; “Chancellors Brandt’s Ostpolitik”; von Dannenberg, *The foundations of Ostpolitik*; Wenkel, *Auf der Suche*, 392–469.

<sup>16</sup> AnF, 5AG3, 938. Memo of Gabriel Robin for Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, February 21, 1979; original quotation: “En Europe de l’Est, la RFA se crée peu à peu, dans les pays où sa présence et son influence furent naguère importantes, une sorte de clientèle qui n’est pas sans rappeler celle que l’Allemagne Wilhelminienne possédait dans le Mitteleuropa. On constate en tous cas une accélération du rythme des contacts . . . [au sommet].”

<sup>17</sup> AnF, 5AG3, 1093, memo for Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, October 26, 1978.

<sup>18</sup> Eckel, *Die Ambivalenz des Guten*.

<sup>19</sup> AnF, 5AG3, 1094, memo of the Directeur d’Europe, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 2, 1979

Moscow in 1979. The President himself noted in a brief bloc-note at the time: "Détente: the organization of Western Europe is a factor of détente (bilateral convention to be foreseen); Germany within a [European] framework."<sup>20</sup> Indeed, at the end of the 1970s Moscow was playing the rivalry card between Paris and Bonn very well as both parties had clear political and economic ambitions with regard to Eastern Europe and aspired to the political leadership in the domain of Ostpolitik.

But London, too, feared that Bonn might not be able to resist the Soviet strategy and the attractions of good relations with Moscow in order to reap advantages in intra-German relations. British diplomats recognized the existence of strong traditions of Ostpolitik in France as well as in Germany; however, they considered that German interests in this domain possessed a much larger legitimacy than the French or the British ones: "For the Germans détente is a necessity, for us a sort of optional extra."<sup>21</sup> On the basis of this rather distant perspective on East-West relations in Europe, the Foreign Office was striving for a more general approach, considering that the other Europeans and in particular the other major (i.e., relevant) powers did not look as if they were able to do so.<sup>22</sup> From a British point of view, the most serious problem in this connection was the dangerous illusions which the French and the Germans still seemed to share with regard to the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> In addition, they feared a Soviet strategy that would make the FRG leave the Western bloc.<sup>24</sup> While insisting on the need to support Bonn, London saw itself as a mediator between East and West, as well as inside the Western camp, especially while the Americans seemed not willing to play this role. In this context the visit of British foreign minister Lord Carrington to Poland at the end of October 1980 was perceived in the Foreign Office as an event of key importance:

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., undated handwritten bloc-note [from Valéry Giscard d'Estaing]; original quotation: "Détente: l'organisation de l'Europe occidentale est un facteur de la détente (convention bilatérale à prévoir); l'encadrement de l'Allemagne."

<sup>21</sup> National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter NAUK), FCO33, 3989, memo of the British embassy in Bonn to the Foreign and Commonwealth office, December 12, 1979.

<sup>22</sup> NAUK, PREM19, 238, planning paper on détente and future management of East-West relations, December 15, 1976; and *ibid.*, letter of Michael Palliser to the East European and Soviet department, Foreign and Commonwealth office, July 5, 1979.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* Planning paper on détente and future management of East-West relations, December 15, 1976.

<sup>24</sup> NAUK, FCO28, 3982, memo of G. Beel, Research department, Foreign and Commonwealth office, May, 19, 1980.

The British were no longer willing to leave the field of détente politics to French and West German diplomacy.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of growing convergence of European détente policies during these years of crisis in the international relations, it is very characteristic that the British evaluation of the French Ostpolitik under Giscard was not so far from the way the official French political philosophy on this issue evolved only a few months later when the Quai d'Orsay reconsidered its approach at the beginning of the presidency of François Mitterrand.<sup>26</sup>

### **West European Détente Coordination after the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan**

In May 1980, with the crisis of East-West relations still deepening, President Giscard went to Wilanow near Warsaw where he met Brezhnev and Polish leader Edward Gierek. This sort of spontaneous consultation in order to discuss the most critical issues on the international agenda had been agreed during Giscard's visit to Moscow a year before.<sup>27</sup> But as Helmut Schmidt's intention to go to Moscow was announced just a few days earlier, French officials at the Quai d'Orsay were generally less enthusiastic about this sort of Franco-Soviet summit. In contrast to the years before, they now feared that such a coincidence might bring Soviet officials to the conclusion that French and German Ostpolitik were still in rivalry and that Europeans and Americans still disagreed on East-West relations.<sup>28</sup> At the Elysée Palace, however, the diplomatic advisers of President Giscard argued that the Wilanow meeting might demonstrate the French room for maneuver in this field: "The meeting illustrates the active role of France and the part she is able to take in the search for a reduction of tensions and for the reestablishment of the East-West dialogue."<sup>29</sup> They would not leave the initiative to the Germans only, indeed a point of mu-

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 4151, memo of private secretary G.G.H. Walden on the secretary of state's visits to Poland and Hungary, November 12, 1980.

<sup>26</sup> AnF, 5AG4, CD392/4, memo of the Centre for Analysis, Planning and Strategy, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 14, 1981.

<sup>27</sup> Vaïsse, "Le chemin de Varsovie."

<sup>28</sup> AnF, 5AG3, 1095, memo of Leclercq for Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, May 7, 1980.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., memo for Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, May 16, 1980; original quotation: "La rencontre illustre donc le rôle actif de la France et la part qu'elle est en mesure de prendre dans la recherche d'une réduction des tensions et du rétablissement du dialogue Est-Ouest."

tual agreement between Giscard and Gierek. The hope of Giscard and his advisors was to demonstrate that France might play an important role in reestablishing the East-West dialogue since the Carter administration did not show any initiative in this field. In order to reach this aim, Giscard asked Brezhnev at this occasion for a new type of summit in 1981, after the presidential elections in the United States—a summit that would neither be limited to the four allies, nor open to all European and North American states, like in Helsinki, but a summit bringing together the most influential players in East-West relations, including West Germany.<sup>30</sup>

During the following years, the Wilanow meeting became a point of reference for French leaders and diplomats. For Giscard, who referred to the meeting in each of his letters to Brezhnev and at any meeting with the Soviet ambassador in Paris; and later on for Giscard's successor François Mitterrand as a negative example, illustrating the difference to his own approach to détente issues.<sup>31</sup> But this change in the official perception of the Wilanow meeting and, to a limited extend, of French foreign policy was not only due to the arrival of the new French president in May 1981. It was also linked in a more general way to the crisis of international relations that gave a voice to French diplomats with different views on détente, who had not been listened before. The most visible sign of this change was the temporary disappearance of the term "détente" from French statements right after the Wilanow meeting. The term was then replaced by an ambiguous formula that insisted on "coordination efforts in order to maintain peace." In London, diplomats were wondering if France did really change its relationship with the Soviet Union. The British doubted that Paris would react harshly to a Soviet invasion in Poland, as long as détente remained the cornerstone of France's independent foreign policy, and as long as economic interests like Soviet oil and gas were at stake.<sup>32</sup>

If there was a growing convergence of German and French views on Soviet policies and strategies, this stemmed from the international crisis in

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., memo of conversation with Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Leonid Brezhnev, and Edward Gierek, May 19, 1980; see also Reynolds, *Summits*, 370–404.

<sup>31</sup> In a conversation with Kissinger on June 26, 1984, Mitterrand declared on the Soviet attitude toward the particular Franco-German relationship: "Ils pensent qu'ils peuvent l'empêcher. Il faut bien dire que mon prédécesseur les y a encouragés, en indiquant que nous parlions, bien sûr, avec les Allemands, mais que nous serions toujours du côté des Russes, si les Allemands essayaient d'aller trop loin." In SAG4, CD 74/1.

<sup>32</sup> NAUK, FCO28, 3985, memo of P. J. Westmacott, British embassy in Paris, on Franco-Soviet relations in the oil and gas sector, August 6, 1980.



the early 1980s. For French diplomats, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan had a direct impact on the détente process in Europe. During the Wilanow meeting, Giscard tried to make Brezhnev understand that by acting in this way, the Soviet Union clearly exceeded the limits of acceptable behavior. As a reaction to this degradation of détente, Paris intensified its political consultations with Bonn. There was indeed very close cooperation between both governments during the intervention in Afghanistan.<sup>33</sup> The diplomatic advisers at the Elysée Palace still feared a relative convergence of views between the Soviets and the West Germans concerning the divisibility of détente between European and extra-European issues.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, French officials were relieved, however, to see that Chancellor Schmidt's journey to Moscow in June 1980 helped to prevent any serious damage to the German-Soviet relationship; a relationship that was now considered in Paris as a crucial element for maintaining constructive East-West relations in general. To anticipate Soviet criticism, Giscard explained in a letter to Brezhnev that Franco-German cooperation on East-West issues as well as on European integration issues was not directed against the Soviet Union, but that both Bonn and Paris favored a continuation of détente.<sup>35</sup> But while disagreeing with Bonn on the way how to react to the intervention in Afghanistan, Paris agreed at the same time with London on this issue.<sup>36</sup>

The crisis in Poland changed the picture, especially due to the related questions of trade and economic cooperation in East-West relations. In this case, the FRG and France agreed to disagree with the United States. They neither accepted a tightening of the commercial relations nor a food blockade as suggested by the Americans. Bonn suggested a policy of "economic containment" as a European response to the Soviet Union, but not without showing strong solidarity with Washington. In order to implement this policy more efficiently, the West German government also aimed at consolidating European Political Cooperation.<sup>37</sup> British representatives agreed in general with these ideas but argued for a differentiation

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<sup>33</sup> Vaïsse, "Le chemin de Varsovie," 169–87.

<sup>34</sup> AnF, 5AG3, 1095, memo of Leclercq for Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, April 23, 1980; see also Obitchkina, "La détente divisible."

<sup>35</sup> AnF, 5AG3, 1095, letter from Valéry Giscard d'Estaing to Leonid Brezhnev, February 6, 1980.

<sup>36</sup> NAUK, FCO49, 875, minutes of the Anglo-French planning talks, March 14, 1980.

<sup>37</sup> Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (Political archives of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hereafter PA/AA), 115.969, memo of conversation with Klaus von Dohnanyi, and Douglas Hurd, January 28, 1980.

on the level of exported products. In fact, British diplomats became more and more conscious about the disastrous commercial and economic policy of their own government with regard to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

But while British foreign policy actually needed this sort of relations as a lever in other domains, they did not have any reason to reestablish them in the aftermath of Afghanistan.<sup>38</sup> In order to defend British interests within the European framework, the Foreign Office was willing to influence U.S. foreign policy in this field: "The UK is well placed in this respect but will be handicapped if the U.S. itself, France and Germany are all conducting a bilateral dialogue with the Soviet Union while the UK has none."<sup>39</sup> While the situation in Poland was worsening and the necessity for common contingency planning was growing, a first trilateral meeting was held in Bonn on a French initiative bringing together diplomats from France, the United Kingdom, and the FRG. The very fact that this meeting took place was welcomed by the Foreign Office as a success.<sup>40</sup> The disagreement amongst Western powers after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan should not be allowed to occur again.

In the end, a convergence of views among different European governments emerged with regard to Washington's stance on East-West issues. The Europeans felt a growing need to fill up the perceived lack of super-power détente in Europe on their own. Especially during the last months of the Carter administration, a phase of particular weakness of the United States in the arena of international relations, the bilateral and multilateral ties among West European states gained a new significance for leaders and officials.<sup>41</sup> But the most important problem which the West Europeans faced in this situation was a structural one: their inability to take advantage at a political level of the growing economic power of the European Community, a problem that could not be solved before 1990 because of the specific link between the underlying ideological conflict and the European integration process.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> NAUK, FCO28, 4201, memo of B. J. P. Fall, Eastern European and Soviet department, Foreign and Commonwealth office, November 17, 1980.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 4198, memo of Curtis Keeble to Bullard on political contacts with the Soviet Union, November 20, 1980.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 4047, letter of A. D. S. Godall, British embassy in Bonn, to H. J. Arbuthnott, British embassy in Paris, December 18, 1980.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, the importance of the meeting between Schmidt and Giscard on November 6, 1980, in PA/AA 140.653

<sup>42</sup> Lundestad, *"Empire" by Integration*; Ludlow, *European Integration*.

After the arrival of Margaret Thatcher at Downing Street No. 10 in 1979 Franco-British relations intensified. From a British perspective this relationship was meant to complement the very close Franco-German partnership forged by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt. A trilateral balance was seen in London as a crucial condition for a healthy European position on the international stage during the ongoing crisis:

The situation has been changed by the crises in Iran and Afghanistan, and by the vacillation, confusion, and ineptitude of the present U.S. Administration. The lack of a clear and consistent lead from the Americans and their preoccupation with their hostages in Teheran, risks greatly increasing the scope for Soviet meddling in Iran, and encouraging the Germans to develop policies in Eastern Europe which go beyond or cut across the policies of the West as a whole: this has been the object of all post-war policy to avoid. . . . In these circumstances we need to strengthen our embryonic tripartite relationship with the French and Germans. This will be a frustrating and painful process, for well-known reasons. It will need much patience. But the Europeans will not be able to function effectively unless they are reasonably united; and this depends on agreement amongst the Three.<sup>43</sup>

The Franco-British rapprochement was based on three common interests: first, both felt a growing necessity to frame West Germany's ambitions on the international stage in general and in the East-West conflict in particular in a wider West European setting; second, they agreed about the impact that the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan had on intra-European relations; and finally, they were both opposed to the inclusion of French or British nuclear warheads into a superpower agreement on disarmament.<sup>44</sup> For Paris and London, this last point seemed to have been the most important one of all three. Consultations on détente between France and Great Britain since the Helsinki Conference in 1975 had taken place only three times until 1979 instead of taking place twice a year as planned.<sup>45</sup> Otherwise, the Foreign Office maintained such consultations only with Sweden. While British diplomats hoped not only to learn from the French experience in terms of Ostpolitik but also to profit from the access of their French colleagues to Eastern Europe, French diplomats seemed always too busy to participate in these meetings. But their interest was suddenly growing after the Wilanow meeting—the consultations were

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<sup>43</sup> NAUK, PREM19, 238, memo of the planning staff on the management of East-West relations, May 2, 1980; addressed to the office of the prime minister on the same day.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, FCO49, 833, minutes of the Anglo-French planning talks, April 3, 1979.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, FCO28, 4018, memo of C. L. G. Mallaby on Anglo-French consultations, February 26, 1980.

reestablished a month later on June 23, 1980. Only this time, London wished to widen the bilateral consultations under French leadership to trilateral consultations with the participation of West Germany.<sup>46</sup> The Franco-British rapprochement continued under François Mitterrand and Margaret Thatcher, who shared concerns about the impact of the West German peace movement, considered in Paris and London as a variation of renascent neutralism in the FRG.<sup>47</sup>

### **New Franco-German Ostpolitik as Nucleus of Renewed European Détente in the Early 1980s?**

After the arrival of François Mitterrand at the Elysée Palace in May 1981, French Ostpolitik seemed to change in a very profound way. Just a few days after his election, the think-tank at the Quai d'Orsay, the Centre d'analyse et de prevision (CAP), prepared a memorandum on the so-called "French card", played by the Soviet Union. This memo was in fact a very keen examination of French détente policies since the mid-1960s, concluding that France had never been a privileged partner of the Soviet Union but only a useful plaything in the hands of Brezhnev and his diplomats rendering prestige and legitimacy to the Soviet Union. Even worse, the CAP considered that France had damaged her allies by favoring a sort of moral disarmament:

The authorization France gave to détente was its indispensable seal of legitimacy. The persistence shown by French officials in order to defend the 'achievements of détente,' in spite of several setbacks, did consolidate a concept that has been considered in Moscow as quite useful, because it allows at the same time the pursuit of a policy of military strengthening and that of expansion in the Third World. . . . The deepening of the dialogue with France and its preservation within the period of crisis (Afghanistan) did lend weight to the idea that the Soviet Union would be a power like others, belonging without any restriction to the concert of nations. But, the quest of normality has precisely been one of the most ancient goals of the Soviet State since Rapallo. . . . France did favor, if not the disarmament of its allies, at least a certain moral disarmament.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., letter of C.L.G. Mallaby to Jean-Pierre Masset, June 17, 1980.

<sup>47</sup> AnF, 5AG4, CD75/2, memo of conversation with François Mitterrand, and Margaret Thatcher, July 29, 1981.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., CD392/4, memo of the Centre for Analysis, Planning and Strategy, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 14, 1981; original quotation: "L'aval de la France a donné à la détente le sceau de légitimité qui lui était indispensable. L'assiduité témoignée par les dirigeants français à défendre les 'acquis de la détente, en dépit des incidents de par-

The CAP therefore recommended a strong disillusion of French foreign policy by maintaining a dialogue, but not the “so-called détente.” In his first meetings with German, U.S., and Soviet statesmen, Mitterrand did not hesitate to show his disagreement with the policies of his predecessors as far as relations with the Soviet Union were concerned. Following this interpretation, the Wilanow meeting was now considered as an offer to the Soviet Union to come back to the table without any service given in return.<sup>49</sup> With this evaluation, the Quai d’Orsay joined the views of the British Foreign Office on détente policy in general since the late 1970s.<sup>50</sup> In order to underline the difference, Mitterrand wrote no more letters to Brezhnev and did not visit Moscow until 1984. Yet only a few months after his election, at the end of 1981, Mitterrand confirmed to the Soviet ambassador in Paris that the French interest still was to preserve a particular relationship with Moscow, highlighting the common interest in overcoming the crisis while omitting the Afghanistan issue. Mitterrand hinted that from the French point of view, this issue was no longer a real matter of concern.<sup>51</sup>

In fact, at the end of 1981, French diplomats hoped that the rock bottom of the crisis had been reached, as evidenced by the reutilization of the term “détente” during the Brezhnev visit in Bonn in November 1981.<sup>52</sup> The FRG was now considered as an honest broker between East and West. However, in France some concerns remained about the vulnerability of the West Germans confronted with a Soviet foreign policy that seemed perfectly able to exploit the pacifism and neutralism of a large section of West German public opinion as it reappeared in the context of the Euromissile crisis. The Soviet Union still seemed to have a “West

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cours, a permis de consolider un concept qui s’est révélé utile à Moscou pour poursuivre parallèlement une politique de renforcement militaire et d’expansion dans le tiers monde. . . . L’approfondissement du dialogue avec la France, et le maintien de celui-ci aux périodes de crise (Afghanistan) a permis d’accréditer à l’extérieur l’idée selon laquelle l’URSS serait une puissance ‘comme les autres’ appartenant sans restrictions au concert des nations. Or, cette recherche de la ‘normalité’ est un des objectifs les plus anciens de l’état soviétique depuis Rapallo. . . . La France a favorisé, sinon le désarmement de ses partenaires, du moins un certain désarmement moral.”

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> NAUK, PREM19, 238, planning paper on détente and future management of East-West relations, December 15, 1976.

<sup>51</sup> AnF, 5AG4, CD76/2, memo of conversation with François Mitterrand, and Stepan Chervonenko, November 16, 1981.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., CD160/1, memo of Joëlle Timsit, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 8, 1981.

German card” at its disposal. But Paris and London had to deal with a new balance in East-West relations in Europe and with the growing status which Bonn reached during these years of crisis. Facing these changes, and still being convinced of the necessity to maintain a dialogue with the Soviet Union, French officials welcomed West German demands for support in dealing with the East.

And even if Mitterrand did not support the idea of an axis between Paris and Bonn at the beginning of his presidency, Franco-German relations were still considered of crucial importance at the Elysée Palace and as the only way to frame the FRG and its ambitions with regard to Eastern Europe. The Franco-German bonds should prevent that German Ostpolitik might get out of control.<sup>53</sup> In a meeting with Helmut Schmidt on these issues in October 1981, Mitterrand considered bilateral relations with the FRG as “the last fortress before madness”:

I am for a particularly strengthened relationship between France and Germany, including the [European] Community issues. Our accord is the only way to avoid being at the mercy of the United States or the Soviet Union. It is also false to say that our relationship will be less intense because we do not speak the same language. Our relationship is imposed by reason and it is based on the common interest of our peoples, as you demonstrated in Brussels. I have the same disposition as you with regard to these issues. Let us prepare by common assent our positions concerning the United States. I am ready to make any kind of gesture, like a common declaration, now or a little later, that could reveal the Franco-German coherence that is in many respects the last fortress before madness.<sup>54</sup>

Henceforward, the intensification of bilateral relations with other countries and especially with the United Kingdom should therefore not under-

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., memo for François Mitterrand, December 31, 1981.

<sup>54</sup> AnF, 5AG4, CD72/2, memo of conversation with François Mitterrand, and Helmut Schmidt, October 7, 1981; original quotation: “Je suis pour des relations particulièrement resserrées entre la France et l’Allemagne y compris en ce qui concerne les questions communautaires. Notre bon accord proclamé est le seul moyen de ne pas être le jouet des États-Unis ou de l’URSS, et il est faux de dire que nos relations seront moins intimes sous prétexte que nous ne parlons pas la même langue. Nos relations sont dictées par la raison et elles sont fondées sur l’intérêt de nos deux peuples, vous venez de le démontrer à Bruxelles. J’ai les mêmes dispositions que vous sur ces questions. Préparons d’un commun accord nos positions en ce qui concerne les États-Unis. Je suis prêt à tout geste, telle qu’une déclaration commune maintenant ou dans quelque temps qui manifesterait la cohérence franco-allemande, sur bien des points elle est le dernier rempart avant la folie”; see also *ibid.*, CD74/1, memo of conversation with François Mitterrand, and Ronald Reagan, March 12, 1983.

mine the confidence of the West Germans in this particular relationship. For this reason, Bonn had from now on to be informed about any step in Franco-British relations.<sup>55</sup> Still, Mitterrand would not share with the German Chancellery the protocols of his meetings with Margaret Thatcher. In order to improve Franco-German cooperation in the Cold War context, Paris was even ready to make some concessions on European integration issues, such as the Genscher-Colombo initiative.<sup>56</sup> The principal idea was to suggest to the West Germans a more European conception of détente that both differed from the American approach and from what was considered in Paris, with regard to the intra-German policy, as a “non-strategic” approach.<sup>57</sup> In 1981, French officials therefore proposed the creation of a Franco-German study group on the relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,<sup>58</sup> followed by a joint statement at the closing of the Franco-German summit in February 1982. Even the idea to abandon the Gaullist definition of the French nuclear deterrent (dissuasive) capacity and to make it a factor in the emergence of a European political union was discussed at the governmental level in this context.<sup>59</sup>

For the West Germans, Ostpolitik and détente alike became increasingly threatened. The approaching deployment of American missiles on West German territory contributed to a psychological deterioration of Soviet-German relations.<sup>60</sup> Hence, West German officials felt a strong need to savior the results of a whole decade by going along with French diplomacy. For both, Paris and Bonn, the decision to get together on these issues marked a fundamental step and determined policies in the context of East-West relations up to the very end of the Cold War. Mitterrand’s speech in the Bundestag on January 20, 1983, could be interpreted as a result of such a new Franco-German Ostpolitik. But despite a number of coordination efforts, the divergence of views did reappear regularly. For

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., CD160/1, memo for François Mitterrand, September 22, 1981.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., CD160/2, memo of conversation with Claude Cheysson, and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, January 20, 1982.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., memo of the Centre for Analysis, Planning and Strategy, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 12, 1982.

<sup>58</sup> This form of cooperation could be compared to the activities of Scandilux, see the chapter by Rasmus Mariager in this volume.

<sup>59</sup> AnF, 5AG4, CD160/2, memo of the Centre for Analysis, Planning and Strategy, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 12, 1982; for the constitution and evolution of the Franco-German study group; see also Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères (archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Europe 1981–85, 4911.

<sup>60</sup> PA/AA, 133.134, undated memo on a conversation with the federal chancellor and his foreign minister.

example, Mitterrand clearly disagreed with Helmut Kohl's trip to Moscow in July 1983—before the deployment of American INFs in Europe.<sup>61</sup> In a more general way, however, the joint statement of February 1982 helped the Germans to continue their practice in relations with the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries while it served at the same time as a basis for a renewed French Ostpolitik.

The visit of François Mitterrand to Hungary in 1982 was a symbol of this renewed French policy toward the East. Had there not been an ongoing crisis there, the newly elected French president would have undertaken his first visit to an East European country to Poland. But already in 1980, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing canceled such travel plans to Warsaw. And due to the precarious state of East-West diplomacy it also seemed impossible to Mitterrand and his advisors to go to Moscow first. Until the very end of the 1970s, Poland remained the most privileged partner of Paris in Eastern Europe in a hierarchy developed by the Quai d'Orsay during the years of détente. This role was now transferred to Hungary, a change of priorities shared by the British Foreign Office.<sup>62</sup> Since the mid-1970s, Hungary had held the third position of French partners in Eastern Europe after Poland and Romania. French officials wished for a spread of Hungarian concepts of détente and human rights all over Eastern Europe. Thus, the political importance of Mitterrand's visit to Budapest was considerably elevated on the part of the French. The addressee was Moscow, to whom the French would demonstrate their willingness to maintain a dialogue. But they also hoped to pass other messages. Presenting Franco-Hungarian relations as part of a European Community signaled—in the eyes of French diplomats—the will to overcome the order of Yalta, that is to end the Cold War:

Under these circumstances, the visit of the President of the French Republic will have a particular echo: Towards the Soviet Union it will show our persistent desire for a dialogue with the Eastern European states, while a coup d'état happens in Warsaw, and despite of Moscow's pressure on these states and their policies. Towards the Eastern European states, it underlines our desire for openness and dialogue with the members of the European Community that is grounded in the most ancient history and that cannot admit its future necessarily broken by Yalta.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> AnF, 5AG4, CD74/1, memo of conversation with François Mitterrand, and Ronald Reagan, March 22, 1984.

<sup>62</sup> NAUK, FCO28, 4148, memo of C.L.G. Mallaby on visits to Eastern Europe by the secretary of state, March 28, 1980.

<sup>63</sup> AnF, 5AG4, CD274/4. Memo of Bertrand Dufourcq, director of the department of European affairs, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 5, 1982; original quotation:



Even more than relations with Poland, relations with Hungary were considered as a step on the road of re-Europeanizing the whole European continent, as a way to overcome the Cold War antagonism in Europe. However, this new way of so-called subversive visits to Eastern Europe would be fully developed by Mitterrand only at the beginning of his second mandate in 1988.

## Conclusion

The lack of substantial U.S. détente policy in 1979 and 1980, and the external pressure of the crisis of East-West relations, forged a certain convergence of views between Paris, Bonn, and London, not only on Cold War issues but also on the development of European integration and the European role at the international arena. A concrete result was a temporary coordination of détente policies during the peak of this crisis of international relations and especially during the transition-period between the Carter and the Reagan administrations. Even if there was no direct impact of Cold War tensions on the European integration process as in the 1950s, the initiatives for deepening the political integration since the mid-1980s can well be interpreted as a result of this rather short intermezzo of intense European policy coordination efforts. The idea of a common Franco-German Ostpolitik, however, a French political purpose since 1963, had to remain an illusion only. At the end of the Cold War, the fundamental differences between France and the FRG with regard to the underlying concepts and objectives of détente in Europe became fully clear once again, as the numerous misunderstandings during the process of Germany's reunification in 1989/90 bore out.<sup>64</sup>

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“Dans ces conditions, la visite du président de la République va prendre une résonnance particulière: vis-à-vis de l'Union soviétique elle marquera, à l'heure du coup de Varsovie, la permanence de notre volonté de dialogue avec les États européens de l'Est, malgré les pressions que Moscou fait peser sur eux et la politique qu'il leur impose. Vis-à-vis des pays de l'Est, elle soulignera notre volonté d'ouverture et de dialogue avec les membres de la communauté de l'Europe, qui puise ses sources dans l'histoire la plus ancienne et dont l'avenir n'a peut-être pas été nécessairement brisé par Yalta.”

<sup>64</sup> Vaisse and Wenkel, *La diplomatie française*, 55–60.



**PART VI**

**THE U.S. STORY:  
FROM COOPERATION  
TO CONFRONTATION  
AND BACK**



# Lyndon B. Johnson and the Building of East-West Bridges

## Catching up with Détente in Europe 1963–1966

*Gry Thomassen*

There is strong evidence that elements of the Lyndon B. Johnson administration's bridge-building policies toward the Eastern bloc between 1963 and 1966 were largely crafted as a response to the early European East-West détente efforts. Primarily, the Johnson administration's détente policies were about stabilizing the military relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as influencing and facilitating political developments in Eastern Europe in order to transform the socio-political systems in the East; however, U.S. détente policies were also about accommodating the West European allies' aspirations and demands for more equality in the alliance and a move toward a joint transatlantic détente effort with the East. The latter perspective is unfolded in this chapter. While West European aspirations and interests were diverse, the Johnson administration's response was about aligning those aspirations to those of the United States and about preserving the cohesion of the alliance. In effect, this effort resulted in a substantial West European influence on the Johnson administration's bridge-building policies from 1963 to 1966.

### **Beyond Vietnam**

The research literature on President Lyndon B. Johnson's policies toward Europe is limited.<sup>1</sup> Not until the 1990s did scholars, primarily American historians, begin researching this topic, and with it a whole new field of

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<sup>1</sup> Brands, *The Wages of Globalism*; Brands, *Beyond Vietnam*; Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson*; Dumbrell, *President Lyndon Johnson*; Cohen and Tucker, *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World*; Kunz, *The Diplomacy*.

study, the so-called beyond Vietnam historiography, emerged. While covering all policy areas beyond Vietnam, only a single monograph is dedicated to the Johnson administration's relations with Western Europe;<sup>2</sup> the administration's policies toward Eastern Europe are yet to be studied in depth. Until the emergence of the "beyond Vietnam" literature, Johnson had a rather tarnished reputation as the instigator of the catastrophic Vietnam policy.<sup>3</sup> In the relatively brief period from the mid-1990s to the present, appraisal of the Johnson Presidency has undergone substantial change, ranging from a (continued) critical account of Johnson's political abilities and foreign policies to a far more positive account of his skills and policies, amounting to a genuine effort to rehabilitate Lyndon B. Johnson's reputation as president.

The new literature takes as its point of departure the changing configurations of international power in the 1960s. Europe reacted against superpower dominium in Europe; China tested the nuclear bomb in 1964; and the crisis years of 1961 and 1962 set new standards for the superpower relationship. In general, the "beyond Vietnam" literature recognizes that the balance of world power changed and that the position of the United States in the world was challenged by these changes during Johnson's presidency.<sup>4</sup> It is not surprising then that the exclusive parameter for the appraisal of Johnsonian policies has been the administration's ability to handle these global-level changes. Central to this approach is the position of the so-called Cold War paradigm in the Administration. Therefore, this school of analysis generally hinges on the notion that the changing global power balance called for new political thinking and a showdown with the globalized and militarized containment policy of the pre-Johnson years. Whether or not the Johnsonian détente policy was a genuine détente policy—and therefore a break away from past years' politics—or a continuance of traditional Cold War policy has become a central issue in historiographic debate.

Hal Brands and Frank Costigliola hold that the Cold War paradigm continued to inform and guide U.S. policies including those toward Western Europe, the latter even claiming that détente failed for this reason.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson*.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; Brands, *The Wages of Globalism*.

<sup>4</sup> It could be added though that since the peak of American power immediately after World War II, there had been a decline and a change in the world balance.

<sup>5</sup> Brands, *The Wages of Globalism*, 259–64; Cohen, Warren, and Tucker, *Lyndon Johnson* 93–194, 210.

Whereas Brands argues that the American political system was responsible for the continued adherence to the Cold War paradigm and that as such Johnson was not to blame for this, Costigliola argues that the Cold War paradigm was maintained because of Johnson and his limited abilities in foreign policy making. By contrast, Thomas Schwartz argues that Johnson's policies toward Western Europe succeeded because Johnson was an able alliance practitioner, but also because the president had a clear vision for deescalating the Cold War, a vision that was based on a break with the Cold War paradigm. Schwartz even hints that Johnson contributed to the West German reunification policy.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter adds to this emerging narrative on the Johnson administration's West European policy and briefly describes the administration's East European policy in relation to the Johnson administration's overall aims. When looking at Western European influence over America's détente policies of the mid-1960s, the chapter argues in part against Schwartz's claims that the Johnson administration had a rather enterprising and proactive West European policy; there was an indisputable West European influence on the U.S. policy of peaceful engagement.

### **The European Détente Movement**

What was, in fact, European détente during the Johnson years? The early European détente process was to a large extent a reaction to the crisis years of 1961 and 1962. The building of the Berlin Wall and the Cuban Missile Crisis made European governments more aware of the extent to which their destinies were linked to U.S.-USSR relations. A growing sense of the need to seek a relaxation of tensions between East and West emerged in both Eastern and Western Europe. West European governments realized that whereas Washington's policies and decisions on peace and war would have and indeed did have a tremendous impact on Western Europe, the continent had close to no influence on these decisions.<sup>7</sup> This realization evolved into two distinct political movements in Western Europe. On one side was the West European détente movement in which West European governments sought to reach out to Eastern Europe in an effort to ease tensions in Europe.<sup>8</sup> On the other, West European govern-

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<sup>6</sup> Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson*, 17–20, footnote 146, 284.

<sup>7</sup> Hanhimäki, Schoenborn, and Zanchetta, *Transatlantic Relations*, 67–68.

<sup>8</sup> Hanhimäki, "Détente in Europe, 1962–1975," 198.

ments sought to improve conditions in the transatlantic relationship and overcome the preponderance of American power in Western Europe. Profound nationalist reactions such as Gaullism and West German Ostpolitik were reflections of these European sentiments. One result of these movements was a remarkable increase in trade relations between Eastern and Western Europe.<sup>9</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, individual states in Eastern Europe also pursued greater political and economic independence from the Kremlin. In the 1950s, Yugoslavia was the first state to break Eastern bloc unity, and in the 1960s Romania and Poland were increasingly guided by national interests rather than bloc interest in their relations with Western Europe, and embarked upon major trade deals and cultural exchanges with Western Europe.<sup>10</sup>

### **U.S.-USSR Relations**

The crisis years did not leave the two superpowers untouched. In both the Kremlin and the White House a rethinking of the modus of the East-West conflict led to a series of new initiatives during the 1960s,<sup>11</sup> culminating in landmark treaties such as the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty and the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Johnson administration also prepared the ground for the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT), which President Richard Nixon would conclude in the early 1970s.

In response to the crisis years, the Khrushchev leadership (1955–64) consolidated the concept of “peaceful coexistence,” with which Soviet leadership aimed at obtaining recognition of the status quo in Europe in order to ease East-West tensions and to formalize Soviet territorial gains after World War II. Although Brezhnev (1964–82) tended to see a formalized détente with the United States as impossible due to the increasing Sino-Soviet ideological rivalry, the peaceful coexistence doctrine was continued.

The Kennedy (1961–63) and Johnson (1963–69) administrations, largely composed of the same foreign policy staff, did not consider “peaceful coexistence” to be a genuine expression of a new Soviet outlook. Although the Johnson administration held the firm belief that the Soviet Union had not changed in any fundamental way and would not in

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>11</sup> Bange and Niedhart, “Introduction.”



the foreseeable future, it did not block the administration's intention to continue Kennedy's détente effort signified by the Partial Test Ban Treaty. Johnson, like his predecessor and most other American presidents, wanted to reduce the threat of nuclear war,<sup>12</sup> and Johnson continued Kennedy's so-called two-track policy of both seeking accommodation with the Soviet Union and keeping a viable military deterrent.<sup>13</sup> The Johnson administration believed that the Sino-Soviet rift restrained the Soviet Union from engaging in any formal agreements and a sustained détente process with the West.<sup>14</sup> Still, shortly after Johnson assumed the presidency, he recommended a continuation of Kennedy's so-called probing strategy,<sup>15</sup> which stipulated that the United States should continue probing into Soviet priorities in order to identify areas of mutual interest.

Yet Johnson appeared somewhat frustrated early on with the state of Soviet-American relations, as well as his image as a "warmonger" versus Khrushchev's image as "the man who wants peace."<sup>16</sup> Only six weeks into his presidency, Johnson complained to his National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy that he needed more flexibility in the U.S. position toward the USSR, and proposals with substance in order to counter Khrushchev's peace posture.<sup>17</sup> Although this outcry had much to do with Johnson's public posture, it resulted in genuine détente policy initiatives early on in his presidency.<sup>18</sup> The administration contemplated various proposals such as defense spending restraints, mutual cutbacks in uranium production, and an attempt to increase U.S. wheat sales to the Soviet Union all with the purpose of reducing tensions between the two superpowers.<sup>19</sup>

Soon after Brezhnev came to power in October 1964, another dimension was added to the Sino-Soviet rift that would distance the Soviet Union further from Washington. According to the Department of State's Policy Planning Council, the new leadership in the Kremlin revived support for Hanoi as an asset in the Soviet rivalry with China. The Council argued that this rivalry endangered the incipient détente in Soviet-

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<sup>12</sup> Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson*, 226.

<sup>13</sup> Dumbrell, *President Lyndon Johnson*, 11.

<sup>14</sup> FRUS, 1964-68, vol. 14, Soviet Union, doc. 11. NIE, "Some Limits on Soviet Efforts to Improve Relations with the West," February 19, 1964.

<sup>15</sup> FRUS, 1964-68, vol. 14, Soviet Union, doc. 7, "MacArthur to Rusk," January 17, 1964; *ibid.*, doc. 11. NIE, February 19, 1964.

<sup>16</sup> "Telecon Johnson to Bundy," January 2, 1964, in Beschloss, *Taking Charge*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Dumbrell, *President Lyndon Johnson*, 12.

<sup>19</sup> Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson*, 18-20; Dumbrell, *President Lyndon Johnson*, 35-36.

American relations and inhibited possibilities for creating a sustainable détente.<sup>20</sup>

According to the Council, Brezhnev's "peaceful coexistence" was only a remedy to enhance communist power throughout the world;<sup>21</sup> however, as the overall position of the Soviet Union in the world had changed favorably by 1965, a continuation of the 1963 détente had less priority in the Soviet leadership.<sup>22</sup>

The Cold War paradigm continued to be the preferred lens in matters relating to the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> However, the Johnson administration continued to challenge traditional ideas about strength and confrontation, and was steadfast in pursuing the détente trajectory of the Kennedy administration, as evidenced by the NPT and preparations for SALT.<sup>24</sup> Recent research even suggests that between 1964 and 1966, the Johnson administration developed a comprehensive transformation strategy toward the Soviet Bloc.<sup>25</sup>

### Tracing Bridge Building

When Johnson assumed the presidency, Eastern Europe had been on and off the political agenda in Washington since the Truman administration first contemplated the containment policy. In the 1940s George Kennan had argued that the United States risked sacrificing Eastern Europe with the containment policy, and the Eisenhower administration developed the policy of liberation in light of Yugoslavia's break from the communist bloc.<sup>26</sup> Even though neither Truman nor Eisenhower managed to keep Eastern Europe on the political agenda in Washington, Eastern Europe as a separate policy area was not new by the time Johnson took over in 1963.

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<sup>20</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 14, Soviet Union, doc. 96, Policy Planning Council, "Soviet Policy in the Light of the Vietnam Crisis," February 15, 1965.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> The concept of peaceful coexistence dates back to Vladimir Lenin, who argued that in the absence of a worldwide socialist victory, the USSR had to coexist with the capitalist world in order to ensure the survival of the gains of the socialist revolution. Khrushchev developed Lenin's thinking and abandoned the idea that a war with the capitalist world was inevitable.

<sup>23</sup> Costigliola, "US Foreign Policy."

<sup>24</sup> Dumbrell characterizes this as an "aspirational détente" (see Dumbrell, *President Lyndon Johnson*, 24).

<sup>25</sup> Kieninger, "Transformation versus Status Quo."

<sup>26</sup> Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*.

The emerging consensus in the Johnson administration was that Eastern Europe was no longer “sacrificable” in the 1960s. One reason for this was West European countries’ outreach to Eastern Europe and the subsequent development of closer political ties between Eastern and Western Europe. Until the West European outreach in the 1960s, it had been an accepted notion in Washington that the containment policy left Eastern Europe solidly behind the Iron Curtain and subject to Soviet dominion. As it turned out, the LBJ administration’s bridge-building policies were very much about managing these emerging bonds between Eastern and Western Europe and bringing them into an Atlantic framework, rather than letting Europe alone handle these essential European issues.

### *The Policy of Liberation*

The idea to liberate Eastern Europe from Soviet domination can be traced back to the Eisenhower administration and its policy of aiding Yugoslavia. With NSC 5601 of January 1956,<sup>27</sup> a policy with the long-term objective of facilitating Yugoslavia’s full participation in the Western world was launched.<sup>28</sup> By 1956 Yugoslavia had a new “peculiar value”<sup>29</sup> for U.S. aims in Eastern Europe and the program for fulfilling this objective was quite substantial.<sup>30</sup> Yet the Hungarian uprising in October 1956 and the subsequent Soviet clampdown proved exactly how tight the Soviet grip was.

However, Eastern Europe continued to force its way onto the political agenda in Washington, and in the early 1960s the centrifugal developments in Eastern Europe continued with a hitherto unseen strength, accentuating the need for a separate East European policy. In 1961 William Griffith and Zbigniew Brzezinski, who would later become a member of Johnson’s Policy Planning Council called for a policy of peaceful engagement in Eastern Europe, claiming that the containment policy unin-

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<sup>27</sup> FRUS, 1952–54, vol.8, Eastern Europe, doc. 688. NSC 5406/1 “United States Policy towards Yugoslavia,” February 6, 1954.

<sup>28</sup> FRUS, 1955–57, vol. 26, Central and Southeastern Europe, doc. 270. NSC 5601 “Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council on United States Policy toward Yugoslavia,” January 9, 1956.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> FRUS, 1952–54, vol. 8, Eastern Europe, doc. 688. NSC 5406/1 “United States Policy towards Yugoslavia,” February 6, 1954; FRUS, 1955–57, vol. 26, Central and Southeastern Europe, doc. 270. NSC 5601 “Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council on United States Policy toward Yugoslavia,” January 9, 1956.

tentionally had little bearing on states that were already under Soviet domination. Coupled with new insights into the diversity of Eastern Europe, the need for a policy toward Eastern Europe on its own premises was clear.<sup>31</sup>

Even more important, outstanding politicians in Western Europe called for a new policy toward Eastern Europe. Willy Brandt, Social Democratic mayor of West Berlin (1958–65) and Egon Bahr, Brandt's political esquire, formulated the antecedents to the Ostpolitik in the late 1950s, and toured Western Europe and the United States with this message.<sup>32</sup> Since Germany was at the heart of the Cold War, American administrations naturally followed this development intensely, and Willy Brandt was frequently referred to in the policy-making branches in Washington in the 1950s and 1960s. So too was French president de Gaulle (1959–69), who put Eastern Europe high on the French foreign policy agenda, proclaiming in 1958 that Europe extended from the Atlantic to the Urals.

Johnson's early bridge-building policy continued this trend, and the administration developed a specific policy toward Eastern Europe in the spring and summer of 1964.<sup>33</sup> Under the impression that the East European states would continue to evolve into "genuinely political entities,"<sup>34</sup> the clear understanding was that the relatively weaker position of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe provided fertile ground for an East European undertaking. Indeed, the bridge-building policy of 1964 aimed at "evolutionizing" East European communism from within, through increased contacts of trade and culture between East and West. The ultimate objective was to dismantle the Iron Curtain so that Eastern and Western Europe could enjoy free association.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Brzezinski and Griffith, "Peaceful Engagement," 642.

<sup>32</sup> Gottfried, "The East-West Problem."

<sup>33</sup> In his 1964 State of the Union Address LBJ also called for the development of allies as a "means of bridging the gap between East and West . . . which can enlarge the hopes of all, while violating the interest of none," which eventually became his policy statement of May 1964. Lyndon B. Johnson: "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union," January 8, 1964, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26787>.

<sup>34</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, doc. 2. CIA: "Nationalism in Eastern Europe," March 27, 1964.

<sup>35</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, doc. 12. Department of State: NSAM 304 "Action program for US Relations with East Europe," n.d.

*Changing Circumstances*

At the same time as the administration developed this new East European policy, it worried about the disintegration of the NATO alliance in light of the significantly reduced threat from the Soviet Union in Europe.<sup>36</sup> In the summer of 1964, faced with Western Europe's direct challenges to U.S. policies and position in the region, Washington was compelled to respond. In effect, the response took the form of a policy that both supported and sought to form the European détente movement, guided by particular interpretations of the changing circumstances in Europe while also maintaining Alliance cohesion. West European challenges to America's position in Western Europe and the U.S. incipient détente policy toward the Soviet Union in this early period (1963–64) originated in France and West Germany.

De Gaulle had for some time campaigned against "American hegemony" in Western Europe and taken steps to challenge the American leadership. In the early 1960s de Gaulle dedicated his efforts to the creation of a Franco-German axis in Europe, signified by the Franco-German Peace Treaty of 1963 and the French veto of British entry into the EEC in 1963.<sup>37</sup> De Gaulle also considered the U.S. proposal to set up the American led and controlled nuclear MLF within NATO as evidence of an American rapprochement with the Soviet Union and a simultaneous maintenance of American hegemony in the Western alliance. De Gaulle believed he could counter this by reaching out to Eastern Europe.<sup>38</sup>

De Gaulle's Eastern policy was, however, more than just a policy aimed at countering U.S. hegemony and reasserting French influence. De Gaulle also sought to transform the bloc-to-bloc system with his Cold War revisionism. In the 1960s, this revisionism was largely seen in Washington as not only a competing détente concept to that of the United States, but also as a grave threat to the Atlantic structure. De Gaulle's Eastern policy and quest to reassert France in the alliance came together in March 1966, when he withdrew France from NATO's integrated military command. Indeed, in Gaullist thinking, as the threat from the Soviet Union diminished, there was a need to transform NATO into a somewhat more political and less U.S.-dominated alliance, and Paris believed that the French step would inspire East European states to break free from Soviet dominion.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson*, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe*, 121–24.

<sup>38</sup> Bozo, "France, 'Gaullism,'" 170.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

De Gaulle's overtures to both Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1963 and 1964 did not go unnoticed in Washington, and were quickly seen as a profound shift in French foreign policy that entailed a French quest to negotiate a *détente* with the Soviet Union and overcome the division of Europe. Much to Washington's annoyance and worry, de Gaulle apparently wanted to organize a common West European effort to this end, leaving the United States behind.<sup>40</sup> By April 1964, Thomas Hughes, director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), wrote Secretary of State Dean Rusk that "it is clear that when de Gaulle decides that Soviet policy has changed to the point that negotiations with the Soviet Union might produce fruitful results, the basic tie that to him justifies the Atlantic Alliance will thereby begin to fray. This shift in French outlook seems underway though its pace and form are still unclear."<sup>41</sup> Although de Gaulle's adherence to the alliance was dependent on the state of East-West relations, Hughes also argued that French adherence after 1969 (the North Atlantic Treaty from 1949 stipulated that member countries could leave the alliance after twenty years) was dependent on the willingness of the rest of the allies to accommodate French ideas about the "nature and structure" of the alliance.<sup>42</sup> However, INR estimated that until 1969 de Gaulle would continue a "limited policy of dis-integrating France from NATO."<sup>43</sup>

De Gaulle did continue his "dis-integration" of France from the alliance. In fact, according to Rusk, de Gaulle almost "dis-integrated" the alliance. In April 1964, just a week after INR's report, de Gaulle withdrew French naval forces from NATO's command. Rusk responded with a far from restrained estimate of the French move, which he characterized as "profoundly disturbing, because they strike at [the] heart of [the] NATO defense system. That system was built up over time on [the] assumption that [the] Alliance could either deter or effectively withstand [the] weight of Soviet military power only if advance arrangements were made and commitments undertaken to ensure that NATO forces would act under integrated command and in coordinated fashion if the Alliance were com-

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<sup>40</sup> LBJL, NSF, France, box 169, CIA: "New Emphasis in French Foreign Policy," 28 February, 1964; LBJL, NSF, France, box 169. INR: "Shift in de Gaulle's Policy towards Germany?" January 2, 1964; *ibid.*, INR: "De Gaulle's Press Conference," January 31, 1964.

<sup>41</sup> LBJL, NSF, France, box 169, "INR to Rusk," April 20, 1964.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

pelled to fight.”<sup>44</sup> De Gaulle’s withdrawal of the French fleet was a clear sign that France opposed “this philosophy and . . . the established NATO military system.” It revealed that “the scrapping of [the] integrated command system [was] an element in the so far unenunicated French plans for NATO reform.”<sup>45</sup> To Rusk this was a highly alarming perspective, and he argued that the loss of the integrated command system in NATO would bring Europe into a situation that differed very little from the situation on the continent before the World Wars.

Although de Gaulle would not undertake any drastic moves in the future, according to Rusk at least, it was possible that other allies would follow the French example and denounce the integration principle, with the implication that Western Europe would return to traditional power politics and the U.S. foothold in Western Europe would consequently be lost. Therefore the problem with allied denunciations of the principle of integration was to be studied and the implications for Atlantic interdependence assessed.<sup>46</sup> Rusk instructed Robert Bowie, who would later be the U.S. representative at the Harmel Study in 1967, to examine “how the Atlantic nations might improve their structures and procedures for concerting policy and action.”<sup>47</sup>

These observations and interpretations were reinforced at the beginning of 1964, and developments in Western Europe were increasingly seen as something that could have profound implications for the solidity of the Western alliance and the Atlantic structure.<sup>48</sup> By the spring of 1964, the French challenge was real, and the contours of a Franco-American conceptual rivalry emerged. Indeed, the essential implication of de Gaulle’s policy and political concepts was that they were competing alternatives not only to American concepts for the organization of Europe but also to the Atlantic Alliance concept.

In the spring of 1964, William Tyler, assistant secretary of state for European Affairs, commented that it may very well be that even though other West European governments did not directly agree with de Gaulle’s policies and philosophy, de Gaulle nevertheless gave “expression to a

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<sup>44</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 13, Western Europe Region, doc. 22, “Rusk to NATO posts,” May 4, 1964.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 13, Western Europe Region, doc. 40 editorial note.

<sup>48</sup> LBJL, NSF, France, box 169. INR. “De Gaulle’s Press Conference,” January 31, 1964; LBJL, NSF, France, box 169. CIA: “Special Report: New Emphasis in French Foreign Policy,” February 28, 1964.

certain sentiment”<sup>49</sup> in Western Europe. Tyler argued carefully that there was a “confused sense” in Western Europe, and that it was both possible and necessary for Western Europe to have interests “which do not in all cases spring from a conception of the world identical with that held by the US.” Indeed, as Western Europe moved closer in political unity and technical integration, it would result in “a permissible differentiation between the European and the United States vision of the world and definition of interests.”<sup>50</sup> By the summer of 1964, it was an established fact in Washington that de Gaulle wanted to enlarge the French role in Western attempts to reach out to Eastern Europe, and that de Gaulle believed the centrifugal developments in Eastern Europe left a vacuum only to be filled by French leadership.<sup>51</sup>

As worrying as the French developments were in the spring of 1964, West German politics proved to be even more harmful in Washington’s view in terms of the solidity of the Atlantic structure. With a “Gaullist” turn in CDU/CSU, the Erhard government’s foreign policy was “Janus-faced” in the words of historians Gress and Bark.<sup>52</sup> In the end, the conflict over the orientation of West German foreign policy undermined the Erhard leadership, and it was a significant reason for the fall of Erhard in 1966. In light of the struggle of orientation, the Erhard government attempted to find middle ground on the German question with the so-called policy of movement reflecting that both the strains in CDU and the CDU foreign policy thinking, especially on the German question, were at a watershed. The policy of movement aimed at opening cultural and economic exchange with Eastern Europe without establishing diplomatic relations, i.e., upholding the non-recognition and isolation of East Germany.<sup>53</sup> The policy was led by Foreign Minister Schröder, who along with Chancellor Erhard was a declared Atlanticist. They both believed that German foreign policy should balance the alliance with the U.S. and European integration with close relations and reconciliation with France. However, the Atlanticists were adamantly opposed to de Gaulle’s scheme for Europe, and supported the British entry into the EEC.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> LBJL, NSF, France, box 169, “Tyler to Bundy,” March 12.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> LBJL, NSF, France, box 170, CIA: “De Gaulle’s Eastern European policy,” July 17, 1964.

<sup>52</sup> Bark and Gress, *A History of West Germany*, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Urwin, *A Political History of Western Europe*, 158.

<sup>54</sup> Bark and Gress, *A History of West Germany*, 14.



Apart from arguing for a strong Europe and for a turn toward the French, the Gaullists in the CDU/CSU claimed in early 1964 that the United States had lost interest in German unification at the expense of the U.S. pursuit of a *détente* with the Soviet Union. Chancellor Erhard's pro-American policy was consistently criticized by the Gaullists, and even though Erhard tried to accommodate the criticism with the "policy of movement," the Gaullists continued to complicate German politics—at least in the eyes of the State Department.<sup>55</sup> What was more unfortunate was that since Johnson had taken office in November 1963, he had advocated that greater contact between West Germany and the East including the GDR, along with recognition of the status quo promised greater achievements in terms of unification than the traditional Hallstein Doctrine insistence on nonrecognition.<sup>56</sup>

From Washington's perspective, the policy of movement therefore had no real substance, and the problem that the German question posed to American policies generated extensive debate in the Johnson administration. The debate evolved around protecting U.S. objectives in the Soviet Union from German obstructionism in particular.<sup>57</sup> Given the administration's developing *détente* concept and "deep desire to achieve a breakthrough in East-West relations,"<sup>58</sup> Rusk argued that the German desires for some progress on the German question posed a serious problem for America's policies toward the Soviet Union—since any move the Germans would propose or take toward German unity affected the East-West balance, and therefore the U.S. relationship with the Soviet Union. To Rusk, the difficulty was how to strike a balance between two essentially "inconsistent objectives," namely, satisfying a West German need for an initiative and the American desire of "not to become too associated with any proposals on the German problem put forward to [the] Soviets unless

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<sup>55</sup> Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson*, 15–16. The Gaullists posed an immediate problem for the entire question of European political unity, i.e., British entry into the EEC, the German unity question appears to have been rated second in this apparent game change in German politics in January 1964. See LBJL, NSF, Germany, box 183, for "Bonn to Rusk," January 25, 1964. On the Gaullism in the CDU/CSU, see also Geiger, *Atlantiker gegen Gaullisten*.

<sup>56</sup> Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson*, 22–23. For more on the American effort to "teach" the Erhard government, see Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson*, and Kieninger, "Transformation versus Status Quo."

<sup>57</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 15, Germany and Berlin, doc. 38, "Bonn to DepState," May 16, 1964.

<sup>58</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 15, Germany and Berlin, doc. 5, "Bonn to DepState," January 21, 1964.

these proposals are likely to appear convincing as sincere attempts to move forward toward [a] basis for real negotiations with the Soviets.”<sup>59</sup>

The potential impact of the German question on the Atlantic Alliance was also alarming, and the new situation in Eastern Europe coupled with the halted European integration process complicated the West German situation even further. At the Atlantic Policy Advisory Group (APAG) meeting in March 1964,<sup>60</sup> Walt Rostow, the director of the State Department’s Policy Planning Council, reported that the Policy Planning Council had argued that the “evolutionary developments” in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union might “present perils and opportunities for Western policy—particularly in terms of German unification.”<sup>61</sup> In response to the plan, the West German representative had “pointed to the rising German sentiment for unification and forecast that the issue would prove a critical test of the NATO alliance,”<sup>62</sup> and claimed that in the event of an East German uprising, the FRG would leave the alliance if nothing was done to move the German cause forward.<sup>63</sup> The West German representative thus brought the question of German unity into the broader framework of Alliance cohesion—which was already under pressure, in the eyes of Washington.

By the spring of 1964, the administration confronted a fourfold challenge in Western Europe: the solidity of the Alliance was perceived to be under severe pressure on at least two fronts, namely West Germany and France. In addition, the distinct reappearance of the German problem seemed to somewhat jeopardize U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union, and Western Europe’s outreach to Eastern Europe made the Johnson administration quite uncomfortable. All these issues had a common denominator in that they all touched upon U.S. freedom of action in foreign policy by challenging the post-1945 position of the United States in Western Europe. Although the NATO alliance was challenged in itself by this complex of issues, NATO was also seen as the obvious framework for solving the transatlantic challenges.

Indeed, in his report on the APAG meeting with Rusk, Rostow argued that the German situation could be contained and that it was possible to

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<sup>59</sup> LBJL, NSF, Germany, box 183, “Rusk to Bonn,” drafted March 9, 1964.

<sup>60</sup> APAG was a part of NATO.

<sup>61</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, doc. 3, “Highlights from the Secretary’s Planning Mtg. held March 31, 1964.”

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

block a “nationalist explosion if we in the Alliance work out with the Germans a policy that promises to move in the direction of unity.”<sup>64</sup> The alliance was an instrument to contain Germany and Rostow argued that, luckily, there was “an environment of somewhat increased willingness to move forward on an Atlantic basis where progress is possible” in Western Europe. In fact, he believed that the “classic pattern” of Europe first and then the Atlantic partnership, had diminished somewhat in light of de Gaulle’s excesses. The situation therefore offered the United States “an opportunity for leadership and forward movement in a number of areas”<sup>65</sup>—one of which was German unification.

The instrumental value of NATO was not something new, and Rostow proposed that the alliance members “by orchestrated bilateralism” should enlarge trade and cultural relations with Eastern Europe. Rostow’s proposal was a response to the emerging trend of individual states in Western Europe both seeking and expanding trade and cultural relations with the Eastern bloc outside the European and Atlantic frameworks. With the State Department’s proposal to launch the bridge-building policy in the late summer of 1964, it was decided that the administration should orchestrate Western Europe’s bilateral relations with Eastern Europe.

The orchestration was also a means to promote and consolidate Atlantic unity in response to both de Gaulle’s blockage of further West European political integration, and the appeal of Gaullism to some Germans and possibly other West Europeans. By the fall of 1964, Rusk was convinced that it was urgent “to get a common appreciation of what is going on in the Communist world,”<sup>66</sup> and that NATO had an active role to play in the matter of Western Europe’s relations with the Eastern bloc.<sup>67</sup> Rusk apparently believed that it was necessary to both strengthen the Atlantic structures, and replace the temporarily halted European integration scheme with an Atlantic framework. Equally important, in the fall of 1964 Rusk no longer cited de Gaulle as the sole threat to this structure; the bilateral West European outreach to Eastern Europe was cited as another.<sup>68</sup> Rostow also reported to Johnson on his trip to Western Europe and recommended, as he had done for Rusk, that the United States move forward

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<sup>64</sup> LBJL, NSF, European integration, box 162, “Rostow to Rusk,” March 25, 1964.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 13, Western Europe Region, doc. 39, “Rusk to NATO capitals et al.,” October 8, 1964.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

on the German question—primarily because if the United States did not react to the German sentiment of a breakaway from the Hallstein Doctrine, the Germans might move in a direction different than U.S. interest projected.

Rostow explained to Johnson that since the European integration process had stopped (temporarily) and the “thaw” in Eastern Europe was rapidly proceeding, the original idea of tying Germany to the West and from there proceeding with unification was expiring. Rostow believed the West was losing its bargaining position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and Eastern Germany, and the European integration process therefore needed to be replaced with an Atlantic structure. The need for the United States to somehow contain and bind Germany into the Western world was, in fact, urgent.<sup>69</sup>

Although Rostow underlined that he was not describing a political crisis in Germany and claimed that Schröder’s foreign policy was quite “solid,” he warned that the developments in Germany “could become dangerous to common Western interests.” Rostow therefore urged Johnson “to press ahead now with such ventures as will help to attract, engage, and bind the Germans to the West and stay close to them in all East-West matters.” Rostow ended this essentially alarming estimate of the current West European political situation with the positive and reassuring notion that “the political raw materials are there to move forward in the Atlantic on a modest piecemeal basis. It will require steady US’ leadership and our sense of direction.” However, if “we fail to organize these new elements of European self-confidence. . . there are dangers of fragmentation in the alliance centered on German political life.”<sup>70</sup>

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These developments tied into the ongoing development of an East European policy in the Administration. Political circumstances in Eastern and Western Europe came together, and it was ever clearer that the United States had to create an Atlantic structure to contain the German quest for unification while also maintaining alliance cohesion in the wake of de Gaulle’s challenge to NATO’s. Although the Johnson administration did not seek a solution to West European challenges exclusively through the bridge-building policy, the policy was designed to overcome these problems by building the very much-needed Atlantic structure to contain and control Western

<sup>69</sup> LBJL, NSF, European integration, box 162, “Rostow to Johnson,” April 9, 1964.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

Europe's policies toward Eastern Europe and the German question, while at the same time addressing the potential alliance fragmentation.

In NSAM 304 of June 3, 1964, President Johnson called for the development of a policy based on his statement on Eastern Europe that the United States "will continue to build bridges across the gulf which has divided us from Eastern Europe. These will be bridges of increased trade, of ideas, of visitors and of humanitarian aid." Johnson asked the Department of State to develop "action programs" and "examine the possibilities of multilateralizing these relations in Eastern and Western Europe."<sup>71</sup> With this latter addition, the Johnson administration looked for ways to enroll Western Europe into the American action program, essentially looking into the possibility of forming and streamlining West European policies with the administration's new East European policy, to overcome the current bilateralism. Although Johnson called for ways to multilateralize relations between Eastern and Western Europe, the United States set out to maintain control over West European reconciliation with and policies toward Eastern Europe. Indeed, before submitting their policy suggestion, the State Department had agreed that reconciliation with Eastern Europe should be of Atlantic rather than European orientation. The argument for an Atlantic orientation mirrored Rostow's line of thinking and focused on the weak political structure in Western Europe. An association of Eastern Europe with Western Europe would only, so the argument went, further "dilute" the political structure in Western Europe, and Eastern Europe should therefore develop closer links with the Atlantic community "as a whole."<sup>72</sup> Moreover, with an exclusive European "reconciliation," the United States would lose its foothold in Europe.

Clearly the Atlantic structure would grant the United States the possibility to closely direct relations between Eastern and Western Europe and overcome the current problems that the United States believed it faced with its European allies. NATO was therefore deemed central for streamlining West European policies with U.S. policies, and the State Department proposed that NATO should be the forum for coordination of trade and credit policies, which were the primary means for the Administration's new East European policy.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> FRUS, 1964-68, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, doc. 4. NSAM 304, "US Relations with Eastern Europe," June 3, 1964.

<sup>72</sup> FRUS, 1964-68, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, doc. 8. "Policy planning Mtg," July 27, 1964,

<sup>73</sup> FRUS, 1964-68, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, doc. 12. Department of State: NSAM 304 "Action program for US Relations with East Europe," n.d.; trade and credit were also

The State Department proposal for the new policy toward Eastern Europe aimed to mellow East European communism from within by building bridges to sustain and facilitate the changes that were already evident.<sup>74</sup> This would, it was believed, create “progress toward the realization of our ultimate objective in East Europe,” which was establishing societies that enjoyed “national independence, security, and a normal relationship with all other countries” (including the Soviet Union), that would “mean the final dismantling of the Iron Curtain and the free association of East Europe and the West.”<sup>75</sup> This highly ambitious aim reveals that the Department of State nourished a genuine ambition to overcome the Cold War in Europe. Germany and the German question figured prominently in the Department’s bridge-building policy. However, the State Department warned that close cooperation with the Germans “in the evolution of Western policies” toward Eastern Europe should be carried out “without permitting Bonn a veto.” According to the State Department, Germany was the key to evolution in Eastern Europe and German unilateralism could obstruct U.S. objectives in Eastern Europe. The coordination of Western policies would increase the chances of realizing the American objectives in Eastern Europe, but more important it would ensure that the United States was not excluded from discussions and decisions taken in Europe that affected the country.<sup>76</sup>

Apart from the already established fact that the United States needed to create strong Atlantic structures in light of de Gaulle’s challenge to NATO and Germany’s potential nationalism, the State Department was well aware of the risk of being excluded from the process of drawing Eastern and Western Europe together. According to the State Department, the United States was far behind Western Europe in “pushing contacts with the Eastern European nations.”<sup>77</sup> In fact, already in March 1964, Rusk told representatives from the EEC that “for the past fifteen years the United States had been a minority of one within the Alliance in East-West trade. Perhaps we had been wrong and our allies right, and

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the core of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. See Kieninger, “Transformation versus Status Quo” and Dumbrell, *President Lyndon Johnson*.

<sup>74</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, doc. 12. Department of State: NSAM 304 “Action program for US Relations with East Europe,” n.d.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

maybe as the subject is explored a compromise can be found.”<sup>78</sup> It was a position in which the Europeans were “not at present unhappy to see the U.S. a minority of one on COCOM.”<sup>79</sup>

In other words, the 1964 bridge-building policy was clearly set in motion because of the opportunities presented by developments in Eastern Europe which initiated the bridge-building policy in the first place. The United States was also under the impression that they needed to build strong Atlantic structures to contain not only the Germans and the possible stirrings within NATO begun by de Gaulle, but also because Western Europe had embarked upon a *détente* policy with Eastern Europe. The administration’s sense of being excluded from European political affairs and—not least the prospect of an untamed bilateralism in Western Europe would be a recurrent concern throughout the Johnson presidency.

### **Tracing the Policy of Peaceful Engagement, 1966**

When de Gaulle withdrew France from NATO’s Integrated Military Command in March 1966, it came as no surprise to the Johnson administration. De Gaulle’s Cold War revisionism and outspoken charges of American hegemony hardly veiled French intentions in alliance matters. Although much of the NATO crisis and the subsequent transformation of the Atlantic Alliance can be attributed to de Gaulle’s deviation, the European allies had called for political influence on matters regarding Europe throughout the early 1960s. The policy of peaceful engagement did not therefore come about exclusively as a result of American thinking; it was also a response to West European demands for a “reconstruction” or re-examination of the Alliance.

In the fall of 1966 the probing strategy had largely succeeded. The Soviet Union accepted the Johnson administration’s invitation to negotiate the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and the Soviet Union and the United States began negotiations in October 1966, and the treaty was concluded by the two parties in 1967. The prospects of concluding the NPT naturally had a bearing on the efforts of the administration to handle the NATO crisis in a timely manner.

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<sup>78</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 13, Western Europe Region, doc. 11, Memo of Conversation, March, 6, 1964.

<sup>79</sup> FRUS, 1964–68, vol. 17, Eastern Europe, doc. 8, “Policy planning Mtg,” July 27, 1964,

*The British Impact*

British prime minister Harold Wilson (1964–70) came to preside over a period of imperial overstretch. While the Labour government followed a policy of preserving Great Britain's status as a global power, the 1960s oversaw the massive overstretch of British armed forces. The UK was committed to no less than three different alliances and by the time Wilson took office, British troops were engaged in a confrontation in Indonesia (1960–66), a campaign fought against insurgents in Aden (1957–67), and one in South Arabia (1968).<sup>80</sup> At the same time, the USSR was thought to be a moderate, and somewhat rational actor on the global stage, and in terms of the threat toward Western Europe and the UK, the Wilson government believed that it was latent rather than imminent.<sup>81</sup> In many ways, the Wilson government and de Gaulle shared the same perception of the Soviet threat.

Immediately after the French withdrawal Wilson sent his preliminary thoughts on the matter to President Johnson, and stated it presented an excellent opportunity for a "radical examination of its [NATO's] structure, force levels, and financial arrangements,"<sup>82</sup> and when bringing the structure "up to date" it should be done with an eye to détente with the Eastern bloc.<sup>83</sup>

On March 29, 1966, Wilson sent an expanded recommendation to Johnson with further thoughts on the problems de Gaulle had brought on the alliance. According to Wilson, de Gaulle's "19th century nationalism . . . and his bull in a china shop tactics" were a danger to the alliance. However, Wilson argued, "it would be wrong to conclude from all this that all the General's thoughts are wrong-headed, his assessments of the way the world is moving completely wide off the mark and that everything he is trying to do is totally unacceptable to all of us."<sup>84</sup> Wilson then went on to argue that de Gaulle's judgments that the nature of the Soviet threat had changed and that, since the danger had decreased, the West should follow a policy of détente with the Soviet Union, were in fact correct. Wilson also argued that "the opportunity that now exists for all of us to re-examine the structure and the purposes of NATO also provides an opportunity for Germany to reassess her legitimate national objectives."

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<sup>80</sup> Hughes, *Harold Wilson's Cold War*, 85–87.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 90–93.

<sup>82</sup> LBJL, NSF, France, box 177 (1 of 2), "Wilson to Johnson," March 21, 1966.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*



The fundamental and almost all-encompassing scope of Wilson's background thoughts was not wasted on the White House; Francis Bator, Johnson's National Security Adviser, commented to Johnson that "since the message has implications for the full range of our policies vis-à-vis Europe and the Soviets, the reply will require some careful work."<sup>85</sup> At the same time the CIA repeated that the rest of the allies were also somewhat in flux on the integration principle, and the agency concluded that "on balance it would therefore appear that we face in NATO a crisis of indeterminate length and uncertain outcome—and one which has the potential for changing in a massive way the whole European outlook."<sup>86</sup>

### Responses to the NATO Crisis

Walt Rostow, who by March 31, 1966, had left his position as chairman for the State Department Policy Planning Council to become special assistant to Johnson for National Security Affairs, summed up the interim position on what needed to be done in response to de Gaulle's withdrawal—namely provide a solution to the nuclear question and the more vaguely formulated "greater equality of partnership with the US."<sup>87</sup> With NSAM 345 issued on April 22, 1966, Johnson asked yet again for a strengthening of the Atlantic structures when he called for the development of "forward looking proposals that would increase the cohesion of NATO and the North Atlantic community. These should embrace two kinds of measures: a. military and non-military programs affecting primarily the affairs of the free world," and echoing Wilson, "b. constructive political, diplomatic, and economic initiatives addressed to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union."<sup>88</sup> The White House appointed the so-called Acheson Committee, a combined Department of State and Department of Defense group headed by the former secretary of state Dean Acheson to come up with a solution to the NATO crisis; the Policy Planning Council also discussed the issue. Both of these groups were charged with the immediate preservation of alliance.

The Council argued for a bargain, namely that in return for the allies' backing of the integration principle, the allies should be given more equality in alliance matters and the United States should "recognize" the new realities in Europe and the potential developments in Eastern Europe and

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<sup>85</sup> LBJL, NSF, France, box 177 (1 of 2), "Bator to Johnson," March 29, 1966.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> LBJL, NSF, Papers of Francis Bator, box 28, "Rostow to Johnson," April 21, 1966.

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/nsams/nsam345.asp>.

the Soviet Union.<sup>89</sup> The Acheson Committee argued that NATO's primary task was to keep Germany in the integrated structure, and control the policies of the allies toward the East. The committee claimed that the alliance was no longer exclusively a military organization to prepare for the military defense of the Western world but increasingly a political organization "to preserve the peace of Europe."<sup>90</sup> The committee also claimed that the political function was particularly important during the current challenges to the cohesion of the alliance. It was therefore necessary for the allies to realize that an agreed NATO policy toward the Eastern bloc was of vital importance, instead of the current bilateralism that was meaningless. In essence, the committee argued that NATO should have both a détente and deterrence focus. The U.S. initiatives that the committee proposed toward the Eastern countries were designed to deal "effectively and quickly with those aspects of our own behavior that set us apart and make us the most restrictive member of the Western community."<sup>91</sup>

### *The Policy of Peaceful Engagement*

Notwithstanding the recommendations of the Acheson Committee and the Policy Planning Council, the West European policy of the Johnson administration remained strained. The problem with Alliance cohesion was unresolved, and the European allies continued their calls for détente with the East. This general sentiment in Western Europe resulted in several proposals to this end. In June 1966, the British presented a proposal in the North Atlantic Council for a declaration on "European security and cooperation"<sup>92</sup> the first of two British proposals which were to be adopted by "East and West European countries [to] improve the atmosphere in Europe."<sup>93</sup> The British proposal was not adopted, mostly because the United States "expressed concern that it concentrated on Europe so much that it seemed to exclude participation by the US."<sup>94</sup> A month previously,

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<sup>89</sup> LBJL, NSF, Papers of Francis Bator, box 28, "Rostow to Johnson," April 21, 1966.

<sup>90</sup> LBJL, NSF, Papers of Francis Bator, box 28, "Ball & Vance to Johnson," June 3, 1966.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, lot file 70D332, box 1. Annex. "INR to Rusk," December 2, 1966.

<sup>93</sup> NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, lot file 70D332, box 1. "INR to Rusk," December 2, 1966; NARA, RG 59, Policy Planning Council, lot file 72D139, box 301. In 1967 the British tabled another proposal Memcon, August 16, 1967.

<sup>94</sup> NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, lot file 70D332, box 1. Annex. "INR to Rusk," December 2, 1966.

Denmark had proposed that NATO approach the Warsaw Pact and call for a European security conference, an initiative which was rejected as “premature” by the United States.<sup>95</sup> In September 1966 at a Political Advisors meeting in NATO, the Belgians officially proposed the establishment of a “permanent body, composed of an equal number of representatives from East and West, in which both sides could exchange views.”<sup>96</sup> The Belgian proposal was rejected and instead the Belgian foreign minister Pierre Harmel proposed a study on the future tasks of the alliance. The study, which was completed in December 1967, recommended that NATO adopt a dual strategy of both détente and deterrence, much as the Acheson Committee had proposed.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk called a meeting in June 1966 in an effort to overcome this apparent bureaucratic deadlock to develop an agreed policy toward the allies and de Gaulle initiatives in Europe.<sup>97</sup> Rusk raised the difficult subject of alliance cohesion,<sup>98</sup> and reiterated and emphasized that the foremost measure was “preparation for a settlement in Eastern Europe.” The demands of Wilson—and other European allies—for a policy toward Eastern Europe revealed that the United States was lagging behind its allies, and forced the United States to act. Indeed, according to Rusk, “in many ways the US is *behind* our allies” and as the administration “already had said much” about a détente with the Eastern bloc, it had to make concrete proposals for a policy toward the East.<sup>99</sup> Rusk recommended that the Department of State prepare a speech to Johnson on NATO to increase the alliance cohesion.

The meeting resulted in NSAM 352, entitled Bridge Building, issued in July 1966, with which Johnson ordered the Department of State to “actively develop areas of peaceful cooperation with the nations of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union,” and to do so “in consultation with our Allies.” Johnson called for “specific actions the Government might take. These actions will be designed to help create an environment in which peaceful settlement of the division of Germany and of Europe will become possible.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. On the Danish initiative, see also the chapter by Poul Villaume in this volume.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> LBJL, Bator papers, box 28, “Bator to Johnson,” June 20, 1966.

<sup>98</sup> LBJL, Bator papers, box 28, “Talking points,” June 23, 1966.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.; underlining in the original.

<sup>100</sup> NSAM 352 Bridge Building July 8, 1966, <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/nsams/nsam352.asp>.

Johnson gave the address in October 1966 before the National Conference of Editorial Writers in New York, launching the new policy of "peaceful engagement." To a large extent the address was a response to the European allies and their continued call for the establishment of a framework to overcome the division of Europe, and it may even be argued that this most central component of the sustained *détente* originated in Western Europe. In addition, the speech reflected the different means which the Johnson administration had developed up to that point and proposed to overcome the NATO crisis.

Johnson stated that it was an American purpose "to help the people of Europe to achieve together . . . a continent in which alliances do not confront each other in bitter hostility, but instead provide a framework in which West and East can act together in order to assure the security of all."<sup>101</sup> This statement was largely crafted around the preceding West European calls for a framework that had been rejected until then by the administration on different grounds such as the exclusion of the United States from Europe, and that an East-West endeavor was an invitation to the Eastern bloc to start raising divisive issues and thereby cause friction in the Western Alliance.<sup>102</sup> Johnson also committed the United States to the political bargain and the *détente* and deterrent formula of the Acheson Committee when he declared that NATO must be kept strong and "must become a forum for increasingly close consultations. These should cover the full range of joint concerns—from East-West relations to crisis management."<sup>103</sup> Johnson also declared, in line with the European allies, that the division of Europe must be settled, and he argued "that our task is to achieve reconciliation with the East—a shift from the narrow concept of coexistence to the broader vision of peaceful engagement."<sup>104</sup> He announced a renewed effort to build bridges toward the Eastern bloc, and added about NATO's instrumentality that "agreement on a broad policy to this end, therefore, should be sought in existing Atlantic organs."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks in New York City Before the National Conference of Editorial Writers," October 7, 1966, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26787>.

<sup>102</sup> NARA, RG 59, Policy Planning Council box 313. "S/P to Rusk," July 25, 1966.

<sup>103</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson: "Remarks in New York City Before the National Conference of Editorial Writers," October 7, 1966, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26787>.

<sup>104</sup> NARA, RG 59, Policy Planning Council box 313, "S/P to Rusk," July 25, 1966.

<sup>105</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks in New York City Before the National Conference of Editorial Writers," October 7, 1966, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26787>. Johnson also spoke about the steps which should be taken in OECD.

## Conclusion

If Western Europe had not called for an initiative toward Eastern Europe, and indeed, had not already been exchanging goods and culture across the Iron Curtain, “without regard for their political consequences,”<sup>106</sup> the subsequent U.S. policy of peaceful engagement would probably not have seen the light of day in 1966. It is therefore meaningful to review the substantial scope and depth of the West European influence on the *détente* policy of the United States at this point in time.

This argument is not made without an eye to the genuine intentions and policies on the part of the Johnson administration to continually seek accommodation and a *détente* with the Soviet Union or without recognizing that the administration developed a policy toward Eastern Europe formulated independently of West European aspirations. Indeed, as the Eisenhower administration’s efforts toward Eastern Europe revealed, Eastern Europe had, in fact, been a policy area that existed independently of Washington’s West European policies. Prior to the Johnson administration’s time in office, other administrations had recognized—however briefly—that there was a real need to actively develop a policy toward Eastern Europe.

The Johnson administration crafted the bridge-building policies around the European *détente* efforts. It may be argued that the most central component of the administration’s policy of peaceful engagement, namely the East-West framework, would not have been developed and crafted as it was in 1966, had it not been for the very specific calls from central West European governments for a turn to *détente* with the East and an understanding in the State Department of the implications of lagging behind the allies. Moreover, the respective bridge-building policies had much to do with preserving the central integration principle for the Atlantic Alliance, which was largely seen as the bulwark against a return to European power politics, and at the same time a guarantor of Atlantic cohesion and a central position for the United States in Europe, both East and West.

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<sup>106</sup> NARA, RG 59, Policy Planning Council box 313, “S/P to Rusk,” July 25, 1966.



# Between Power Politics and Morality

## The United States, the Long Détente, and the Transformation of Europe, 1969–1985

*Stephan Kieninger*

Détente seemed to prolong the division of Europe. It seemed to be un-American. From the perspective of its many critics, détente allowed for the Soviet Union's strategic buildup in the 1970s and it precipitated America's decline in the wake of Vietnam. Even worse, by preaching moral equivalence between Communism and Western democracy, détente allegedly made the United States lose sight of its mission. Only when Ronald Reagan started to abandon détente could the U.S. win the "Cold War endgame." This is the traditional narrative.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter tells a different story by arguing that the U.S. policy of peaceful change could only thrive in a sustainable security framework that the United States and its Western European allies built through détente, dialogue, and engagement with the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup>

If the mission of the United States was to be continued in the nuclear age, changing the Soviet system through diplomacy and engagement remained the only practicable option. Too much emphasis on mission and the Cold War rhetoric of "liberation" and "roll-back" stood in the way of change.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, too much emphasis on power threatened to undermine American ideals.<sup>4</sup> The dialectics of stability and change was on the mind of a small circle of U.S., British, and West German policy planners when they met for three days of discussions over the future of détente in Washington in April 1969. Just eight months had passed since the oppression of the Prague Spring. However, the Warsaw Pact's Bu-

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<sup>1</sup> See Gaddis, *The Cold War*.

<sup>2</sup> See Kieninger, *Dynamic Détente*.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*.

<sup>4</sup> On this dilemma in U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis Eastern Europe, see Bange, "Die USA und die oppositionellen Bewegungen."

dapest Appeal for the convocation of a European Security Conference in March 1969 was an earnest sign that the Soviet Union was eager to resume dialogue.<sup>5</sup>

In April 1969, the policy planners from Bonn, London, and Washington thought about ways to continue Western efforts to work for changes behind the Iron Curtain without giving the Soviet Union the impression that NATO sought to undermine Soviet control over Eastern Europe. The crucial question was how one could “disengage the Soviets from Eastern Europe step-by-step.”<sup>6</sup> Egon Bahr, then the policy planning director in Bonn’s Foreign Office, argued that “the only way is beginning projects that link Eastern and Western Europe in ways the Soviets don’t consider dangerous.” Bahr emphasized that “you bring this about only if you don’t put Soviet domination into question.” Bahr was right in pointing out that “this is a long procedure with its own contradictions, but it is the only way unless you give up the objective of liberating Europe.”<sup>7</sup>

As it turned out, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) gave East and West the opportunity to pursue détente on a broad basis—yet with different objectives. Both sides differed over the question of how the gap left by the Cold War would be filled. The Soviets envisaged détente as a “certain amount of official co-operation between two groupings of countries with different concepts.”<sup>8</sup> In addition, the Western proponents of a dynamic détente wanted a “gradual overcoming of the barriers separating the people involved.”<sup>9</sup> The Soviet Union was interested in legalizing the status quo through détente. Bahr reiterated that “the West, too, wants détente, though with the aim of relaxing the present power relationship in Europe and of terminating the division of the continent.”<sup>10</sup> Both sides wrangled for several years until *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE brought about a *modus vivendi* in Europe that encapsulated ele-

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<sup>5</sup> For the text of the Budapest Appeal of March 17, 1969, see Mastny and Byrne, *A Card-board Castle?*, 330ff.

<sup>6</sup> National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, (RG 59), Records of the Policy Planning Council 1967-1973, Lot 73 D 363, Box 401, “Egon Bahr’s remarks at the trilateral policy planning talks on April 18, 1969.”

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> See the remarks by Rijnhard van Lynden, then Dutch Ambassador in Washington, in a session of the North Atlantic Council on March 13, 1974, in NATO Archives Brussels (NATO), Minutes of the North Atlantic Council 1969–1974 (C-R), (74)-11.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council 1967–1973, Box 401, “Egon Bahr’s remarks at the trilateral policy planning talks on April 18, 1969.”



ments of stability and change: the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 gave the Soviet Union the multilateral recognition of the status quo.<sup>11</sup> At the same time though, the Helsinki Accords contained dynamic elements such as its provisions on freer movement of people, information and ideas, and the principle of the peaceful change of frontiers.<sup>12</sup>

In the era of détente, the objective of NATO's policy was not the maxim of winning the Cold War. Rather, NATO was eager to wage the conflict between East and West on the battlefield of the mind.<sup>13</sup> The objective was to perforate the Iron Curtain.<sup>14</sup> Lyndon Johnson called this approach "bridge-building."<sup>15</sup> Western policy-makers acknowledged that, in addition to deterrence, "the conviction must be reaffirmed that the free society [of the West] possesses greater vigor and vitality."<sup>16</sup> Compared to the West, the Soviet Union could build equally good missiles and tanks. But the Soviet Union had a soft-power problem in Eastern Europe. The Soviet empire was kept together by force rather than by the ability to attract and to persuade. Hence, in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the erection of the Berlin Wall, policy-makers such as Lyndon Johnson and Willy Brandt were eager to search for ways to thaw the Cold War and to "engage the Eastern European states in the largest possible volume of communications" in order to bring about liberalizing changes in the societies behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See Kieninger, "Den Status quo aufrechterhalten oder ihn langfristig überwinden? Der Wettkampf westlicher Entspannungsstrategien in den Siebzigerjahren."

<sup>12</sup> See Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975*.

<sup>13</sup> In 1982, Max Kampelman, the head of the American delegation to the CSCE Follow-Up Meeting in Madrid, used this metaphor to urge the Reagan administration to intensify the ideological competition with the Soviet Union. See Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), Minneapolis, Max M. Kampelman Papers, Box 14, for memorandum from Kampelman to Eugene Rostow, November 18, 1982.

<sup>14</sup> See Villaume and Westad, *Perforating the Iron Curtain*.

<sup>15</sup> The term "bridge-builder" pertains to those politicians and officials who were proponents of a dynamic détente that was aimed at building bridges of human contacts across the Iron Curtain in order to facilitate changes in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union.

<sup>16</sup> This conviction was behind the policy initiatives that Willy Brandt, Lyndon Johnson, and Dean Rusk drew up in their search for détente. In September 1964, Brandt sent Rusk a paper on "Relations with Eastern European States and Peoples" that reiterates this premise. On September 4, 1964, Rusk received the paper through John Calhoun, the Deputy Chief of the U.S. Mission in Berlin and a close friend of Brandt. The paper is printed in Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1964-1968, vol. 15 (Germany and Berlin), 151ff.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Bridge-building and peaceful engagement implied sustainable change. These policies did not aim to undermine or to overthrow political systems over the short term. Rather, the assumption was that by granting the Communist rulers international security, they could be brought to open up their hitherto closed systems to Western ideas. It was argued that the industrialization in the countries behind the Iron Curtain had brought about new social groups and an urban middle class. Over the long run these groups would raise demands for human rights and more political participation.<sup>18</sup> The rational hope in the West was that one could stimulate change in these societies through the expansion of human contacts across the Iron Curtain—be it through trade, culture, scientific exchanges, radio, TV, family reunification, or tourism. Willy Brandt reiterated that the objective was “the transformation of the other side.”<sup>19</sup>

### **“Is the United States Going to Continue to Be a Great Nation Number One?” Nixon and the Pursuit of Power Politics<sup>20</sup>**

It is an irony of history that Richard Nixon assumed the presidency at a moment when the time was ripe for the breakthrough of the Western transformation approach. Nixon did not continue the transformation policy since he was convinced that the United States was too weak to pursue it in Europe. In contrast, Brandt reiterated that peaceful coexistence “is not just synonymous with the status quo, but instead is a competition which Communism is bound to lose.”<sup>21</sup> Johnson thought in similar terms and wanted a détente offensive because he was convinced that “our system is better.”<sup>22</sup> The proponents of the transformation approach pursued a dynamic détente

<sup>18</sup> See Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*.

<sup>19</sup> See “Vortrag des Regierenden Bürgermeisters von Berlin, Brandt, in der Evangelischen Akademie Tutzing,” July 15, 1963, in *DzD*, Series IV, Vol. 9/2, 1963, pp. 565ff. Oliver Bange and Gottfried Niedhart introduced the term “transformation” as a historiographic means to inquire into the evolution of dynamic détente policies. See Bange and Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975*.

<sup>20</sup> This question determined Nixon’s foreign policy to a large extent. Nixon brought it up in a conversation with Haldeman, August 13, 1971; see Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, 344.

<sup>21</sup> Brandt’s lecture on peaceful coexistence at Harvard, October 2, 1962, quoted in Schmidt, “Die Wurzeln der Entspannung,” 523. Without substantial “sanitizing,” Brandt’s lectures were soon turned into the book *Koexistenz*.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson’s Telephone Conversation with National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, January 2, 1964, 3.00 pm, in Beschloss, *Taking Charge*, 144ff.

policy that was aimed at opening up “the way to direct encounter and competition between the societies of East and West.”<sup>23</sup> Walter Scheel reiterated that “we have wanted this because we believe in the power of conviction of our ideals and because we trust in the inner strength of our system, which is based on democratic liberties, human rights and social justice.”<sup>24</sup>

Nixon lacked confidence and belief in the power of these Western ideas. Time and again, he doubted that the U.S. could continue to summon the moral and material strength to keep its global empire together. Nixon was not the “hopeful realist” that he at times claimed to be.<sup>25</sup> Due to his fears over communist subversion and Kissinger’s uneasiness over the increased contacts between the two Germanies, both men envisaged the boldly proclaimed “era of negotiation” in the old tradition of *Realpolitik*. They conceived détente primarily as a tool that would help them to preserve the status quo in Europe.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, Nixon felt that he was “presiding over the partial dissolution of the American empire.”<sup>27</sup> From the president’s vantage point, the situation in Europe was particularly dangerous. By 1972, he had come to the conclusion that European integration was no longer necessarily in the U.S. interest if the European Community adopted an “anti-US trade policy.”<sup>28</sup> Nixon was troubled that the West Europeans might sacrifice their ties to

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<sup>23</sup> NATO.C-VR (73)36, Part 2, Minutes of NATO’s Ministerial Meeting, 1966–1974. “Remarks by Walter Scheel, the FRG’s Foreign Minister, at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Copenhagen on June 14, 1973.”

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> In an address before the NATO Council in Washington on the occasion of NATO’s twentieth anniversary on April 10, 1969, Nixon urged his colleagues to “count [us] today among the hopeful realists.” See FRUS 1969–76, vol. 1 (Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969–1972), 69ff.

<sup>26</sup> See Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*.

<sup>27</sup> Henry Kissinger’s confidant Lawrence Eagleburger described this mood in a memorandum to Kissinger entitled “The United States and Europe,” January 26, 1970; NARA, RG 59, Lot 81 D 286, Box 2, Records of the Counselor, 1955–77 (henceforward Sonnenfeldt Files).

<sup>28</sup> In a meeting with members of the Council on International Economic Policy (CIEP), Nixon perceived the expansion of the EC’s preferential agreements as violating the GATT accords. For the record of the conversation between Nixon and the CIEP members on September 11, 1972, see FRUS 1969–76, vol. 1, 411ff. Geir Lundestad reiterates that Nixon and Kissinger “were reevaluating Washington’s traditional policy of strong support for European integration. . . . In the end Washington concluded that the whole matter of European integration was best left largely to the Europeans themselves. They, not the United States, should be the one pushing for such integration.” See Lundestad, *Empire by Integration*, 9f.

the United States in order to play a more independent role between the superpowers. He was scared that “the Soviets are trying to identify themselves with the Europeans against the US.”<sup>29</sup> It was against this background that he had Kissinger proclaim 1973 the “Year of Europe.” Nixon intended to adopt the kind of “heavy-handed role” in Europe that he wanted to avoid in the early stages of his Presidency.<sup>30</sup> In times of great inner tension, Nixon even thought that “NATO was done anyway.”<sup>31</sup>

Given these fears, Nixon was convinced that the only feasible way to maintain order was to divide up the world between the superpowers. He was convinced that stability could only be achieved through a balance of power approach abandoning America’s impetus for morality in foreign policy.<sup>32</sup> Nixon was against more societal intercourse because he feared that the East might use the expansion of human contacts across the Iron Curtain as a means to undermine the allegedly weak West.<sup>33</sup> Nixon was concerned that the CSCE was a loser for the West.<sup>34</sup>

Nixon’s concern over the erosion of the American empire and his distrust of Soviet intentions also made him pursue the linkage strategy. After all, “linkage . . . was not merely a bargaining strategy but, more important, a test of Soviet credibility.”<sup>35</sup> Linkage meant that the Soviets should cooper-

<sup>29</sup> To illustrate his point, Nixon told the CIEP the story that Borzov, the winner of the Olympic 100 meter race, emphasized that “this race marked the end of an era and now the *Europeans* are the best. . . . Brezhnev and Kosygin say almost the same thing.” Ibid. See also FRUS 1969–1976, vol. 1, 411ff, “Peter Flanigan’s notes of Nixon’s conversation with the CIEP on September 11, 1972.”

<sup>30</sup> In a conversation with British Prime Minister Harold Wilson on January 28, 1970, Richard Nixon argued that “I have never been one who believes the US should have control of the actions of Europe.” Initially, Nixon wanted “friendly competition with the United States.” See NARA, Nixon, NSC, Institutional Files, Box H-110.

<sup>31</sup> FRUS 1969–76, vol. 14 (Soviet Union October 1971–May 1972), 427ff, for Memcon Nixon-Kissinger, April 19, 1972.

<sup>32</sup> In talking to Kissinger before the latter’s top-secret trip to Moscow to prepare for the incipient Moscow Summit, Nixon reiterated that “what we’re really saying to them [the Soviets] in effect, look we’ll divide up the world, but by God you’re going to respect our side or we won’t respect your side.” See *ibid.*, 427ff, for Memcon Nixon-Kissinger, April 19, 1972.

<sup>33</sup> For instance, Nixon told Italian Prime Minister Mariano Rumor that “the danger of detente is that it makes Communism respectable and therefore adds to the drawing power of the Communist groups.” See Memcon Nixon-Rumor, June 26, 1974; NARA, Nixon, Presidential/HAK Memcons, Box 1029.

<sup>34</sup> See FRUS 1969–76, vol. 39, for an excellent documentation of Richard Nixon’s attitude toward the CSCE.

<sup>35</sup> Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust*.

ate consistently on issues across the board. In *White House Years*, Kissinger alleged that "linkage was a reality, not a decision."<sup>36</sup> In fact, though, it was a decision to use linkage. Nixon and Kissinger rejected Lyndon Johnson's efforts to engage the Soviet Union and to search for common interest in Europe regardless of the Vietnam War.<sup>37</sup> Whereas the Johnson administration had pursued détente with emphasis on process, Nixon and Kissinger were focused on structure. The Johnson administration was eager to engage the Soviet Union in as many ways as possible and to move forward in steps. The theory was that "the experience of solving small problems will make it easier eventually to solve big ones."<sup>38</sup> Francis Bator has argued that "the advantage of focusing on process, rather than on structure, is that painful choices are postponed and dilemmas bypassed."<sup>39</sup> Nixon's linkage between SALT and Soviet help in Vietnam soon forestalled progress in superpower relations. Vietnam was not a suitable issue on which to test Soviet credibility. Apart from arms supplies, Moscow's ability to influence the North Vietnamese in the peace talks with the United States was limited.<sup>40</sup> Linkage turned out to be "a recipe for deadlock."<sup>41</sup>

Eventually, the success of Ostpolitik in 1972 kept superpower détente alive despite the tremendous escalation of the Vietnam War. The ratification of the Eastern treaties in the spring of 1972 enabled Richard Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev to convoke the Moscow Summit and to sign the SALT I Agreement as well as the ABM Treaty. The Soviets were apparently not prepared to sacrifice their détente policy toward the West for the sake of Vietnam.<sup>42</sup> Ostpolitik gave the Soviets more of a stake in the incipient détente. Although Nixon suspected that the policy initiatives of the Brandt-Scheel administration might undermine the Federal Republic's Western ties, Ostpolitik turned out to be a "precursor and a necessary catalyst for Nixon's own détente."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 129.

<sup>37</sup> Early on, Kissinger lamented that Johnson's engagement policy had led to "the compartmentalization of our relations with the USSR." FRUS 1969-76, vol. 12 (Soviet Union January 1969-October 1970), 49ff., "Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon," February 18, 1969.

<sup>38</sup> Bator, *The Politics of Alliance*, 348.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> See Lüthi, "Beyond Betrayal."

<sup>41</sup> Hanhimäki, "Dr. Kissinger," 649.

<sup>42</sup> See FRUS 1969-1976, vol. 14, 418ff, for Kissinger's Memorandum to Nixon on April 19, 1972, in preparation for his top-secret trip to Moscow to prepare for the incipient Moscow Summit.

<sup>43</sup> Looking back on the interdependence between Ostpolitik and Nixon's détente in December 1972, Martin Hillenbrand confined to his diary that "the Ostpolitik of Chancellor

However, the Europeans lacked a say in the security dimension of *détente*. In the early 1970s, the West Germans were alone in their aspirations to create the military preconditions to overcome Europe's division over the long term through mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) between East and West. In contrast to the Germans and the bridge-builders in Washington, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger wanted to avoid troop reductions—although Congressional pressure for unilateral cuts forced them to start MBFR negotiations with the Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup> They were concerned that any kind of mutual and balanced troop reductions was to the detriment of NATO's security and might lead to the "possible Finlandization of Germany."<sup>45</sup> Nixon believed that the CSCE might turn into a highly dangerous affair if MBFR were somehow included in its agenda. He was convinced that "you can damn near forget NATO" if troop reductions were to take place under the roof of the CSCE.<sup>46</sup> The objective was to separate the MBFR negotiations from the CSCE and to drag them out for a couple of years in order to calm down Congress and to use the prospects of cuts as a tool to pressure West Europeans to share more of NATO's military burden.<sup>47</sup> Time and again, Nixon warned Brandt that he did not believe that "hardware can be given for software."<sup>48</sup>

After all, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger were convinced that the Soviets were only willing to cooperate if one confronted them with power politics. But Nixon's and Kissinger's penchant for power was self-defeating. Their aspirations to perpetuate the U.S. margin of nuclear superiority through SALT turned against the United States. Whereas the Johnson administration wanted to halt the arms race, Richard Nixon's maxim was that "we are not gonna freeze ourselves."<sup>49</sup> Given Nixon's and Kissinger's assumption that the Soviets would only acquire the capability to

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Brandt [was] as a necessary catalyst, in fact a prerequisite for the Nixon approach to the Soviet Union." See Martin J. Hillenbrand Papers, Richard B. Russell Library, Athens (GA), Series II, Box 2, for Hillenbrand's diary entry on December 30, 1972.

<sup>44</sup> Zimmermann, "The improbable Permanence."

<sup>45</sup> NARA, Nixon, WHSF, P Office Files, Box 87. "Memcon Nixon/Kissinger-Luns," January 31, 1972.

<sup>46</sup> FRUS 1969-1976, vol. 14, 427ff. "Memcon Nixon-Kissinger," April 19, 1972.

<sup>47</sup> FRUS 1969-1976, vol. 39, 311ff. "Memcon Kissinger-Debré," July 7, 1972.

<sup>48</sup> FRUS 1969-1976, vol. 40, 952ff. "Memcon Brandt-Nixon," December 29, 1971; Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1971, 2008ff. The Germans adopted Nixon's formulation in their record of the meeting.

<sup>49</sup> FRUS 1969-76, vol. 32 (SALT 1969-1972), 587ff. Nixon's remarks in a meeting with Kissinger, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on August 10, 1971.

deploy ballistic missiles with hydra-headed warheads in the late 1970s, they were eager to avoid a ban on these so-called Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs) in the SALT negotiations. When a missile is MIRVed it is able to carry many warheads and deliver them on separate targets. The first missiles had only one warhead and both their accuracy and reliability were significantly lower than in the 1970s. The deployment of MIRVs ran counter to sustainable efforts to stabilize the strategic balance. After all, land-based MIRVs in silos are a “good killer, but not a good survivor.” Due to the high accuracy, each superpower needed only to fire a couple of MIRVed missiles to wipe out a good number of the other side’s MIRVed Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs). Thus, in the age of MIRVs, the attacker attains a decisively superior position. The downside of MIRVs was that they put “a premium on surprise and preemption in a crisis.”<sup>50</sup>

Nixon and Kissinger were miscalculating the speed of the Soviet MIRV program. They had committed the infamous “MIRV Mistake.”<sup>51</sup> After all, in 1974 the Soviets began to deploy ICBMs with multiple nuclear warheads in each missile, carrying up to ten independently targetable warheads. In 1972, the calculation of the Nixon administration was that due to the MIRV technology the 1,710 U.S. ICBMs and Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) permitted in SALT would add up to about 5,900 warheads compared to an aggregate of 3,700 Soviet warheads.<sup>52</sup> Yet, when the Soviets started to MIRV their 1,000 giant ICBMs permitted under SALT, it was predictable that Moscow might possess about 10,000 warheads in the early 1980s.

In effect, Nixon’s and Kissinger’s aspirations for nuclear supremacy started to turn against the United States. Their “MIRV Mistake” caused a feverish domestic debate on détente. SALT seemed to jeopardize U.S. security in the future. Domestic détente critics argued that the Soviet MIRV program would over the middle and long term lead to an American window of vulnerability.<sup>53</sup> Experts came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union could destroy 90 percent of the land-based U.S. deterrent by striking first.<sup>54</sup> Dé-

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<sup>50</sup> See Bundy, *Danger and Survival*, 551.

<sup>51</sup> See Hersh, *The Price of Power*, 147ff.

<sup>52</sup> These figures were mentioned in a letter from Deputy National Security Adviser Alexander Haig to Ronald Reagan who was back then a prominent opponent of SALT. Haig wrote the letter on June 7, 1972, in the aftermath of the Moscow Summit and the conclusion of SALT. NARA, Nixon, NSC, SALT, Box 887.

<sup>53</sup> See Walsh, *The Military Balance*.

<sup>54</sup> See Podvig, “The Window of Vulnerability.”

tente opponents accused Nixon and Kissinger of having bargained away the power position of the U.S. in SALT. Against this background the U.S. public did not appreciate the enormous concessions that the Soviet leadership made on the occasion of the first summit meeting between Gerald Ford and Leonid Brezhnev in Vladivostok in November 1974. Faced with ever stronger criticism even within his administration, President Ford hesitated to turn the tentative Vladivostok agreement into a new SALT treaty before the 1976 presidential election.<sup>55</sup>

The structural reasons for the deep crisis of superpower détente can be traced back to the “MIRV Mistake.” MIRVs “diverted the arms race into the permitted channels.”<sup>56</sup> The “MIRV Mistake” made superpower relations prone to tensions and endangered the kind of stability that Nixon and Kissinger needed to pursue détente. Both men were “flawed architects” as they failed to bring about a lasting structure for superpower détente in the 1970s.<sup>57</sup> It goes without saying that the escalating arms race was a setback for the policy of peaceful engagement. Yet, the Western Europeans and the bridge-builders in the State Department managed to keep the transformation policy alive through Ostpolitik and the CSCE.

### **Transatlantic Networking and the Continuation of the Transformation Approach in the Nixon-Kissinger Years**

Whereas Richard Nixon was concerned about the evolving people-to-people détente, the bridge-builders in the State Department and their West European partners were eager to use the incipient CSCE as a means to continue Lyndon Johnson’s policy. During the preparations for the trilateral policy planners’ meeting in Washington in April 1969, David Linebaugh of the State Department’s Planning Staff inquired as to “what happened to the policy of ‘peaceful engagement’ and ‘bridge-building’? Are we not as interested as LBJ seemed to be in promoting an easing of tensions between Eastern Europe and Western Europe and in promoting in-

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<sup>55</sup> See Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*.

<sup>56</sup> Gerard Smith, the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, wanted to conclude a comprehensive agreement on strategic arms including a ban on ABM and MIRVs. Time and again, Smith reiterated that “when you leave weapons systems in the open, you divert the arms race into the permitted channels.” See FRUS 1969–76, vol. 32, 89ff, for Smith’s remarks in a meeting of the National Security Council on July 17, 1969.

<sup>57</sup> See Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect*.



creased contacts and greater trade?”<sup>58</sup> In February 1969, Henry Owen wrote Secretary of State William Rogers a memorandum asking “what do we do about bridge-building in the wake of Czechoslovakia: Stop, slow down, change direction, or proceed as is?”<sup>59</sup>

As it turned out, the bridge-builders were eager to continue their policy and to preserve Kennedy’s and Johnson’s legacy. They tried to halt the arms race by proposing that the Nixon administration should use the SALT negotiations to bring about a ban on the infamous MIRVs.<sup>60</sup> Nixon rejected this logic. He was convinced that continued arms competition was needed to keep the Soviet Union at bay.<sup>61</sup> As Francis Gavin argued, Nixon and Kissinger “wanted to return to nuclear superiority” which due to “domestic politics and the world situation . . . was simply not in the cards.”<sup>62</sup> After all, “after more than two decades of an expensive commitment to the Cold War, and years of bloody, failing war in Vietnam, Americans did not have the stomach for escalating the strategic arms race with the Soviets.”<sup>63</sup> Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger circumvented the bridge-builders in the SALT negotiations through their backchannel diplomacy with the Soviet Union. Secrecy and duplicity enabled them to avoid a MIRV ban and to institutionalize the arms race behind the back of the U.S. public.<sup>64</sup>

From the start, the bridge-builders in the Department of State had been opposed to Nixon’s linkage approach. They were convinced that détente with the Soviet Union and particularly the SALT talks as the crucial issues of the day were by far too important to link them to Soviet help to end a hopeless war in Vietnam. They were guided by the premise that “Vietnam

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<sup>58</sup> NARA, RG 59, Records of the Policy Planning Council 1967–1973, Box 401. “Memorandum from David Linebaugh to Miriam Camps,” April 9, 1969; Linebaugh criticized that the British paper for the incipient trilateral policy planning meeting in Washington lacked references to bridge-building.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, Box 403, “Memorandum from Henry Owen to William Rogers,” February 4, 1969.

<sup>60</sup> In the spring of 1969, ACDA Director Gerard Smith urged Nixon to halt the arms race through his proposal to “stop-where-we-are” of May 9, 1969. FRUS 1969–76, vol. 32, 41ff.

<sup>61</sup> Albeit Nixon admitted that “in major [arms] categories they have caught us . . . they believe if they get into a race with us on the military side, they cannot hope to gain an advantage and win it.” Nixon’s remarks before his Cabinet and a number of selected NSC staffers, June 16, 1972, in: FRUS 1969–76, vol. 1, 408ff.

<sup>62</sup> Gavin, “Nuclear Nixon,” 132.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> See Smith, *Double Talk*.

will go over . . . but the atomic age will last for eternity.”<sup>65</sup> The bridge-builders also raised their voice against Nixon’s trade policy toward Europe. Nixon was against a substantial expansion expanding trade as long as the Eastern Europeans were supporting North Vietnam. The bridge-builders and even Helmut Sonnenfeldt of Henry Kissinger’s NSC Staff argued that the Vietnam linkage gave the Soviet Union a veto over U.S. trade policy toward Eastern Europe.<sup>66</sup>

However, in the CSCE negotiations, the bridge-builders were able to assert themselves against the White House through transatlantic networking.<sup>67</sup> Bridge-building could only survive the Nixon-Kissinger years if its proponents pursued it in a low-key manner so that it could not be spotted and then counteracted by the White House. Another reason for the survival of bridge-building was Nixon’s and Kissinger’s neglect for the allegedly irrelevant substance of the CSCE. Their ignorance of NATO’s preparatory work for the conference allowed the bridge-builders to take the lead in this endeavor. In the spring of 1970, Nixon and Kissinger accepted the State Department’s leadership in NATO’s preparations for the conference because the State Department’s European Bureau managed to portray its policy as a damage-limiting exercise aimed at keeping the alliance together.<sup>68</sup>

When the convocation of the CSCE came into reach after the conclusion of the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin in September 1971, Nixon and Kissinger decided to give the State Department official bureaucratic authority over the CSCE. Nixon realized that he could not prevent the Department from working on CSCE issues. The bridge-builders’ interest in the CSCE suited Nixon well as he wanted to keep the State Department away from his preparations for the incipient Moscow Summit in May 1972.<sup>69</sup> After Secretary of State William Rogers had gained bureaucratic

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<sup>65</sup> Kubbig, *Wissen als Machtfaktor*, 211.

<sup>66</sup> FRUS 1969–76, vol. 12, 160ff. “Memorandum from Helmut Sonnenfeldt to Henry Kissinger: Memo to the President—Comment on Our Policy,” May 22, 1969.

<sup>67</sup> Kieninger, “Transformation or Status Quo”; Weisbrode, *The Atlantic Century*; Kieninger, *Dynamic Détente*.

<sup>68</sup> See NARA, Nixon, NSC, Institutional Files, Box 111, “Minute of an NSC Review Group Meeting,” April 16, 1970; FRUS 1969–76, vol. 39, 60f.

<sup>69</sup> In a telephone conversation with Kissinger on October 2, 1971, Nixon reiterated that he wanted to play a “double track game on this [the CSCE].” Nixon argued that “we have settled with Gromyko and Dobrynin has word to handle it through channels and also preparations for the summit. You have to give State things to do. . . . On the security conference I would let them do it. It’s high level but you can’t be in a position where they will do nothing. . . . On the other hand, I want Dobrynin to understand that he can

turf in the autumn of 1971, the bridge-builders in the European Bureau could afford to challenge the damage-limiting rationale of the White House. Under the leadership of William Rogers and Martin Hillenbrand in Washington and George Vest in the North Atlantic Council in Brussels, the bridge-builders played a key role in the evolution of NATO's detailed agenda for the conference.<sup>70</sup> Throughout three years of intra-NATO discussions until the start of the Multilateral Preparatory Talks (MPT) in November 1972, the State Department's European Bureau carried the ball when the alliance drew up the Western CSCE agenda focusing on the freer movement of people, information, and ideas.<sup>71</sup>

When the MPT started, George Vest and the U.S. CSCE delegation abandoned their role as spearheaders of NATO's transformation strategy. They adopted a low profile and let the West Europeans argue it out with the Soviets. At the same time, despite its behind-the-scenes-role, the U.S. delegation clearly supported the Western cause. During the MPT, George Vest let the French and German delegations attack the Soviets while he had a hand on the shoulders of his most important CSCE allies.<sup>72</sup> This approach had the advantage of avoiding open confrontations with the Soviet delegation that might have turned the whole CSCE project into a counterproductive shouting match early on. At the outset of the MPT, Vest received instructions that were unspecific enough to give him the kind of elbow room he needed vis-à-vis the White House.<sup>73</sup>

Indeed, George Vest conducted the negotiations in Helsinki without written advice from Washington. John Maresca recalled that "the officials

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talk with Rogers but I will make the decisions." See NARA, Nixon, NSC, HAK Telcons, Box 11.

<sup>70</sup> When Kissinger launched yet another tirade against the CSCE in an NSC meeting on December 1, 1971, Rogers jumped in and emphasized that "a conference might be turned to our advantage." FRUS 1969–76, vol. 39, 236ff. "Minutes of an NSC Meeting on December 1, 1971."

<sup>71</sup> See Goodby, *Europe Undivided*, see particularly chapter 2, "Challenging the Bipolar Order: The American Origins of the West's Campaign for Human Rights," 37–64.

<sup>72</sup> For this metaphor, see Goodby, "The Origins of the Human Rights," 4; see also Weisbrode, *The Atlantic Century*, 236.

<sup>73</sup> Secretary of State William Rogers urged Vest to conduct the negotiations in a "business-like approach" and to support the Western agenda that he himself had drawn up to a large part. Moreover, Rogers stressed that Vest "should not discourage concurrent consultations between EC members." NARA, RG 59, Central Files 1970–1973, Box 1712, "Telegram from Rogers to US Helsinki (No. 210642)," November 18, 1972; *ibid.*, "Memorandum from Kissinger to Rogers," November 17, 1972, Kissinger informed Rogers that Nixon had approved Rogers's instructions.

concerned were afraid that if they attempted to put instructions in writing, Kissinger would not have agreed to a strong U.S. position.”<sup>74</sup> Maresca emphasized that the U.S. CSCE delegation “tried to give maximum support to Western positions, especially on human rights-related matters without going so far in confronting the Soviets that Kissinger would become personally involved and possibly rein in the U.S. position.”<sup>75</sup> The U.S. transformation strategy survived in the CSCE because the West Europeans prevailed over Nixon’s and Kissinger’s efforts to tone down the substance of the Western CSCE agenda.<sup>76</sup> The intransigence of the West Europeans gave the bridge-builders the cover to continue their policy. EUR Director Arthur Hartman and Albert Sherer, the leader of the U.S. CSCE delegation, knew that it was sufficient to take a low profile and let Kissinger argue it out with the West Europeans. In effect, “NATO solidarity thus substituted for Washington instructions and was used by the U.S. delegation in its communications with Washington as justification for positions taken in the absence of instructions.”<sup>77</sup>

Kissinger could not bring his European partners to trim their ambitious objectives in the CSCE to the kind of “minimum desired results” that he envisaged.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, the Soviets were not prepared to make concessions in MBFR. Hence, in the fall of 1974, Kissinger’s status quo détente was stuck: SALT was stalemated, MBFR was going nowhere, and the prospects for U.S. trade with the Soviet Union were gloomy after the passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment in Congress. Eventually, Kissinger came to put his bargaining weight behind the dynamic détente that he had almost killed during the previous years.<sup>79</sup> Finally overcoming his reluctance, Kissinger confronted the Soviets on issues such as peaceful change, freer movement, and Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) in the CSCE.

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<sup>74</sup> Maresca, *To Helsinki*, 44.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>76</sup> For instance, in February 1973, Kissinger bluntly told Gaston Thorn of Luxemburg that “we never believed in it [the CSCE]. We want to get it over with. . . . Why should there be a long debate about mandates. The best thing is to get nothing or just something banal.” FRUS 1969–76, vol. 39, 397ff., “Memcon Kissinger-Thorn,” February 21, 1973.

<sup>77</sup> Maresca, *To Helsinki*, 45.

<sup>78</sup> On Kissinger’s defensive CSCE policy, see Hanhimäki, “They can write in Swahili.” On the intransigence of the EC-Nine, see Romano, *From Détente in Europe*.

<sup>79</sup> In October 1974, Crispin Tickell, the Head of the Western Organization’s Department in the FCO, confronted Helmut Sonnenfeldt with the fact that “finally, the CSCE seemed to be going well for the Allies. We shouldn’t give up if we were winning in one negotiation.” NARA, RG 59, Sonnenfeldt Files, Box 3, “Memcon Sonnenfeldt-Tickell,” October 9, 1974.

In early 1975, Kissinger increasingly realized that the bridge-builders had the chips and that the Soviets could be brought to concessions. When Kissinger's linkage policy failed in the autumn of 1974, the Bureau of European Affairs with its apt and savvy new Director Arthur Hartman gained ever more leverage.<sup>80</sup> Finally, during the last months of the CSCE negotiations, Kissinger followed the advice of the bridge-builders in his own department and put his bargaining weight behind the dynamic détente policy. Eventually, he joined the bandwagon.<sup>81</sup> On behalf of the West Germans, he found a solution on the wording and the placement of the clause on the peaceful change of frontiers in the final document in top-secret talks with Andrei Gromyko in February 1975.<sup>82</sup> Finally, in May 1975, he confronted the Soviets with his support for the other two contentious issues, namely freer movement and CBMs.<sup>83</sup> In effect, Kissinger helped the U.S. transformation approach to survive under the roof of his status quo-oriented détente.

At the same time though, domestic criticism over the CSCE was mounting.<sup>84</sup> The American public was mistaken in perceiving the Helsinki Final Act as a super Yalta. It turned against Kissinger that he had constantly rejected educating the public on the CSCE's benefits for the West. In the summer of 1975, against the background of heightened domestic criticism, Kissinger suddenly started to hail the CSCE in public in order to defend détente. However, his grudging support for the transformation policy did not imply that he had gone through a "learning process."<sup>85</sup> Kissinger never believed in the virtues of a dynamic détente. Rather, he supported it as a means to save his own policy toward the Soviet Union.

Stability was the common element in both approaches.<sup>86</sup> In Nixon's and Kissinger's balance of power policy, stability was essential to cement

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<sup>80</sup> In September 1974, Kissinger finally supported his allies in their demands that a first reading of Basket III texts was essential. The bridge-builders and the EC nine were only willing to search for final trade-offs if they received Soviet reactions to all Western proposals. Albert Sherer and Jacques Andréani, the leader of the French delegation, put together a unified Western position for the first reading of Basket III texts. In the autumn 1974, Andréani and Sherer began to identify Western negotiations priorities and then solicited Kissinger's support for them. For a good documentation, see Yale, Sherer Diaries, Box 4. On Hartman's role, see Weisbrode, *The Atlantic Century*, 252f; Kieninger, *Dynamic Détente*.

<sup>81</sup> See Kieninger, "Joining the Bandwagon without a Learning Process."

<sup>82</sup> See Niedhart, "Peaceful Change of Frontiers."

<sup>83</sup> See FRUS 1969–76, vol. 39, 823ff for "Memcon Kissinger-Gromyko," May 19, 1975.

<sup>84</sup> On domestic criticism, see Snyder, "Jerry, don't go."

<sup>85</sup> For the "learning process" argument, see Suri, "Henry Kissinger."

<sup>86</sup> On the parallels and differences in Nixon's and Brandt's détente policies, see Niedhart, "U.S. Détente."

the allegedly endangered status quo in Europe. For the proponents of the transformation approach in the Department of State and in Western Europe, stability in international relations was a precondition to guarantee the regimes behind the Iron Curtain the kind of security that would—over time—allow them to open up their societies to Western influence.

Though Henry Kissinger had long objected NATO's dynamic *détente* policy in the CSCE negotiations, his status quo approach suited the bridge-builders better than Jimmy Carter's and Zbigniew Brzezinski's focus on mission. Despite the fact that Kissinger did not share the belief in the virtue of the transformation approach, he always took into account the interests of the West Europeans at decisive turning points. Although initially prejudiced against Ostpolitik,<sup>87</sup> he made it a success and put his bargaining weight behind German efforts for a peaceful change clause in the Helsinki Final Act.<sup>88</sup> Kissinger even made an unconscious contribution to the success of the transformation policy in the CSCE. His hostile attitude and utter neglect toward the entire project made the Communist leaders believe that they could easily come to terms with the ramifications of the Helsinki provisions.<sup>89</sup>

### **Domestic *Détente* Critique in the United States and the Crisis of Superpower *Détente***

The year 1975 was a watershed in many ways. It was a year of crisis and opportunity. On the one hand, the Helsinki Final Act was the pinnacle of *détente*. On the other hand, 1975 saw the beginning of a *détente* crisis that

<sup>87</sup> See Niedhart, "Ostpolitik."

<sup>88</sup> Albeit he lamented about "the nutty Germans" and their lawyerly arguments time and again, Kissinger knew that German issues mattered. In preparing for Schmidt's visit to Washington in December 1974, Kissinger argued that Schmidt, the "good ally," must not be annoyed by efforts to bring the CSCE to a close in a way "which looks like collusion." Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, MI, National Security Advisor, Memcons 1973–77, Box 7. "Memcon Ford-Kissinger-Scowcroft," December 3, 1974. On "nutty Germans," see FRUS 1969–76, vol. 39, 749ff, for Memcon Kissinger-Brezhnev, October 24, 1974.

<sup>89</sup> For this argument, see Griffith, "Foreword." Although Kissinger had come to put his bargaining weight behind NATO's demands in Basket III by May 1975, he still made fun of the virtue of the transformation strategy telling Gromyko "I don't think you'll change your systems as a result of Basket III." FRUS 1969–76, vol. 39, 823ff., "Memcon Kissinger-Gromyko," May 19, 1975.

turned out to continue for almost a decade.<sup>90</sup> The first serious setbacks emerged in late 1974 when the success of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment signaled that domestic protest against détente in the United States could do serious harm over the long term.<sup>91</sup> The domestic détente opponents had two motives for attacking Kissinger's policy. In the wake of Watergate, the most imminent source of criticism was the reproach that Kissinger had sacrificed morality in domestic as well as foreign policy. Against the background of the tremendous Soviet strategic buildup, the second central point of criticism was the argument that Nixon, Kissinger, and Ford had sold away U.S. strength rendering the United States vulnerable in the escalating arms race with the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Vietcong's conquest of South Vietnam in the spring of 1975 was interpreted as moral surrender, as weakening the credibility of the U.S. and as a decisive Communist triumph in a global chess game for power.

The moral dimension of the détente criticism resulted in the establishment of the U.S. Helsinki Commission under the direction of Congresswoman Millicent Fenwick.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, 1976 saw the construction of the so-called Sonnenfeldt Doctrine. Kissinger was publicly attacked after Helmut Sonnenfeldt had allegedly propagated the cementing of Soviet rule over Eastern Europe at a meeting of U.S. ambassadors in Europe in December 1975.<sup>93</sup> Throughout the 1976 campaign, Gerald Ford was

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<sup>90</sup> See Nuti, *The Crisis of Détente*.

<sup>91</sup> Nixon's mistrust also stood in the way of meaningful efforts to expand trade with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. In fact, as Werner Lippert pointed out, "trade was for Nixon little more than a political tool to continue the struggle against an ideological adversary. The Communist regimes were still enemies, and trade was seen as a political weapon." See Lippert, "The Economics of Ostpolitik," 72. On Nixon's concept of East-West trade, see Lippert, *The Economic Diplomacy*. See also Werner Lippert's chapter in this volume on the "Implications of East-West Trade in the 1970s." Nixon's hawkish attitude gave domestic détente critics such as Senator Henry Jackson and Congressman Charles Vanik a platform to attack Nixon's policy and to link Congressional approval of a trade bill including MFN treatment for the Soviet Union with Jewish emigration from the USSR. Congress adopted the Jackson-Vanik Amendment in December 1974. See Kochavi, "Insights Abandoned."

<sup>92</sup> Mario Del Pero distinguishes between the "strategic dimension" and the "moral dimension" of the neoconservative critique of détente. See Pero, *The Eccentric Realist*, 121ff.

<sup>93</sup> By selectively quoting from Sonnenfeldt's remarks, syndicated journalists Evans and Novak led the public to this conclusion. In fact, a close look at the records suggests that Sonnenfeldt made the case for intensifying the Western transformation policy through the CSCE. See NARA, RG 59, Sonnenfeldt Files, Box 3, for the Verbatim Transcripts of the Meeting of Ambassadors in London, December 13, 1975. The transcript is also printed in FRUS 1969–76, vol. E-15, "Documents on Eastern Europe," 1973–76, Docu-

weakened by his inability to convince the evolving U.S. Helsinki network of his administration's honest concern for human rights and morality.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, Ford lost a lot of credibility in a TV debate with Carter when instead of denying the existence of the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine he denied Soviet dominance over Eastern Europe instead.<sup>95</sup>

The hardware criticism of détente also came up in 1974 when members of government including James Schlesinger and Paul Nitze began to attack the Nixon administration's SALT policy, criticizing Kissinger for allowing a Soviet advantage in terms of missile throw-weight, i.e., the payload and the destructive capacity a missile can carry. Nitze and Schlesinger were soon joined by a group of conservatives from the Democratic Party that formed the Coalition for a Democratic Majority in 1972.<sup>96</sup> In 1974, the coalition established a Foreign Policy Task Force under the chairmanship of Eugene Rostow in order to criticize the Nixon-Kissinger policy.<sup>97</sup>

In March 1976, Rostow's and Nitze's collaboration led to the revival of the Committee on the Present Danger whose mission was to "alert the public on the growing Soviet threat."<sup>98</sup> Time and again, the committee

ment No. 14; for a good account on the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, see Ribuffo, "Is Poland a Soviet Satellite?"

<sup>94</sup> See Snyder, "Through the Looking Glass."

<sup>95</sup> It seems that Carter discovered the tremendous appeal of the human rights theme when he detected that it was extremely popular with the electorate to jump at Ford after the latter's flap on TV. For this argument, see Bange, "Die USA."

<sup>96</sup> On the rise of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority within the Democratic Party, see Vaisse, *Neoconservatism*, 81ff.

<sup>97</sup> See Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 27. Writing to his trusted friend Kurt Birrenbach, Eugene Rostow complained that "we are all sleepwalkers, with our Ostpolitik, or poor Nixon's desperate dream of 'détente' which he hopes can save him from disgrace and destruction." Yale, Rostow Papers, Box 7, Accession No. 1985-M-004, "Rostow's Letter to Birrenbach," February 5, 1974; Justin Vaisse describes Rostow as the "central figure in the CDM's growing opposition to détente." See Vaisse, *Neoconservatism*, 100. In July 1974, the CDM's Foreign Policy Task Force produced a report titled "The Quest for Détente" that was published as a response to Kissinger's call for a public debate on U.S.-Soviet relations. Raymond Garthoff describes this report as the "the first major head-on assault on the entire Nixon-Kissinger policy of Détente." See Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 461f.

<sup>98</sup> Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 28. The idea for establishing the CPD came from Rostow and emerged in November 1975. On December 1, 1975, Rostow wrote Nitze and Dr. Charles Walker that "after a Bloody Mary on Thanksgiving," he had the idea that they could start "a National Bipartisan Committee for a Sensible Foreign and Defense Policy." See Yale, Rostow Papers, Box 7, Accession No. 1985-M-004, for "Memorandum from Rostow to Charls Walker and Paul Nitze 'How to proceed,'" December 1, 1975; after several planning meetings in the spring of 1976, the CPD was formally launched on November 11, 1976. On the CPD's foundation, see Vaisse, *Neoconservatism*, 162ff.



warned that the "Soviet nuclear offensive and defensive forces are designed to enable the USSR to fight, survive and win an all-out nuclear war should it occur."<sup>99</sup> This message was underpinned by new intelligence analysis that was drawn up by the so-called Team B, a group of détente critics that was set up by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) under the auspices of CIA director George H. W. Bush. Team B questioned the validity of official estimates and exaggerated the Soviet threat as a means to contribute to public alarmism.<sup>100</sup>

In these circumstances, Henry Kissinger lost his exclusive advisory role with Gerald Ford and his power basis as NSC adviser in the White House during the so-called Halloween Massacre of November 1975 when Donald Rumsfeld succeeded Schlesinger as Secretary of Defense and the liberal Nelson Rockefeller announced that he intended to withdraw from the ticket for the vice presidency.<sup>101</sup> The erosion of Kissinger's influence continued when President Ford dropped the term "détente" from his vocabulary in March 1976 in order to calm down protest within the Republican Party. Moreover, Ford agreed to establish a conservative foreign policy plank at the party's election convention under the pressure of his inner-party rival Ronald Reagan.<sup>102</sup> Ford banned the term "détente" from his vocabulary albeit he was determined to continue the policy of East-West cooperation. Ford's concession to the détente critics at home furthered domestic attacks on his policy. Don Kendall, one of Ford's most influential advisors on domestic policy, warned him that "when you drop the word it rattles not only here but around the world. You support the process but people don't believe it because you drop the word."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 29. For the CPD's policy papers, see also Tyroler II, *Alerting America*.

<sup>100</sup> On Team B's genesis, its composition and its mission, see Vaisse, *Neoconservatism*, 153ff. On Team B's exaggerated analysis of the Soviet threat, see Garthoff, "Foreign Intelligence."

<sup>101</sup> According to Kissinger, Ford came to the decision to rearrange things when Kissinger was on a trip to Asia from October 17 to October 24. After his return, Ford informed Kissinger and Rumsfeld of his decision without providing explanation. See Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 836. On Ford's account of his decision, see Ford, *A Time to Heal*, 322ff. Ford makes the point that it was primarily his strained relationship with Schlesinger and the latter's permanent rivalry with Kissinger that were the causes for the "Halloween Massacre." In fact, it seems that White House Chief of Staff had engineered the coup in Kissinger's absence. For this argument, see Weisbrode, *The Atlantic Century*, 243.

<sup>102</sup> On Ford's account on his contest with Reagan for the Republican Presidential nomination, see Ford, *A Time to Heal*, 333ff.

<sup>103</sup> GFL, NSA, Memcons, Box 19. "Memcon Ford-Kendall," April 8, 1976.

When Jimmy Carter assumed the presidency in January 1977, he reassured Brezhnev of his willingness to continue détente. In his initial letter to Brezhnev on January 26, 1977, Carter affirmed that it was his goal “to improve relations with the Soviet Union on the basis of reciprocity, mutual respect and benefit.”<sup>104</sup> First and foremost, Carter was eager to accomplish a breakthrough in the SALT negotiations seeking considerable cuts in the strategic arsenals of both superpowers.<sup>105</sup> However, the Soviet leaders felt offended because Carter was eager to abandon the Vladivostok SALT formula of November 1974. The announcement of Carter’s plans was a shock for the aging and ailing Brezhnev.

After all, Vladivostok was invaluable for the Soviets. Its ramifications went far beyond mere numbers. Vladivostok was not just an arms control agreement. The Soviets saw Vladivostok as “the ratification of [their] status as the other superpower.”<sup>106</sup> The tentative agreement gave the Soviets U.S. recognition of their nuclear equality—the equality the Soviets had sought throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Vladivostok seemed to undo the Soviet “nuclear inferiority complex.” Due to Nixon’s and Kissinger’s “MIRV Mistake” in SALT I, the Soviet leadership approached Vladivostok in a superior position with an edge in hydra-headed warheads. Brezhnev spilled “political blood” with the Soviet military in defending his concession to give the Americans a common ceiling on MIRVs.<sup>107</sup> But in return, Ford and Kissinger omitted controversial issues. At Vladivostok

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<sup>104</sup> Jimmy Carter Library (JCL), Atlanta, GA, Zbigniew Brzezinski Donated Materials (Brzezinski Collection), Subject Files, Box 18. “Carter’s Letter to Brezhnev,” January 26, 1977.

<sup>105</sup> As early as February 1, 1977, Carter told Anatoly Dobrynin that “he would like to move rapidly—aggressively—on arms control issues with the Soviet Union.” See JCL, National Security Affairs 7, Box 34, for “Memcon Carter/Vance/Brzezinski-Dobrynin,” February 1, 1977.

<sup>106</sup> This remark was made by General Nikolai N. Detinov, former Soviet Deputy Minister of Defense and SALT II representative of the Central Committee of the CPSU during an oral history workshop organized by the so-called “Carter-Brezhnev Project” that involved American and Soviet eyewitnesses. Detinov’s remark stemmed from the second workshop on “SALT II and the Growth of Mistrust” held at Musgrove Plantation, St. Simon’s Island, Georgia, May 6–9, 1994. On May 13, 1994, James J. Blight, a Senior Research Fellow at Brown University’s Watson Center and one of the driving forces behind the project, sent former President Jimmy Carter a summary of the transcript that was kept at the workshop. The National Security Archive at George Washington University put online these texts as well as a series of documents on the Carter-Brezhnev years. See <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/carterbrezhnev/index.html>.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

there was no discussion of human rights and no linkage to conflicts in Africa and elsewhere.<sup>108</sup>

Carter's SALT proposal for deep cuts drove the Soviets up against the wall. They perceived it as an attempt to cut the heavy missiles that they most depended upon for deterrence. Whereas Nixon's aspirations for nuclear supremacy institutionalized the race in strategic arms, Carter's deep cuts proposal made the Soviets look as the proponents of nuclear overkill. The aging Brezhnev saw the Carter administration's deep-cuts proposal as an attempt to "redraw U.S.-Soviet relations virtually from scratch."<sup>109</sup> As early as February 1977, Brezhnev denounced Carter's initiative as "lofty goals" and "deliberately unacceptable."<sup>110</sup> Carter responded complaining that Brezhnev's "letter . . . caused me some concern because of its somewhat harsh tone, because it failed to assume good faith on my part."<sup>111</sup>

The lack of close dialogue on the highest level exacerbated the crisis of confidence.<sup>112</sup> Nixon's détente would have been impossible without the Kissinger-Dobrynin channel.<sup>113</sup> Although Vance and Brzezinski met Dobrynin time and again to discuss the state of affairs, Carter deliberately abandoned the institutionalized backchannel as it deemed him an intransparent remnant of Kissinger's secret policies. Carter's aversion against backchannel diplomacy stood in the way of Dobrynin and Averell Harriman's efforts to establish such a permanent institution even in advance of Inauguration Day in January 1977.<sup>114</sup> While Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and ACDA Director Paul Warnke were negotiating on SALT, the President and Brzezinski had still not begun a confidential dialogue with

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<sup>108</sup> See NARA, RG 59, Sonnenfeldt Files, Box 6, for an in-depth account on the Vladivostok meetings in late November 1974.

<sup>109</sup> This was Anatoly Dobrynin's impression back at the time. See page 8 of the summary of the oral history workshop on SALT that James Blight sent to Jimmy Carter on May 16, 1994.

<sup>110</sup> JCL. Brzezinski Collection, Subject Files, Box 18. "Brezhnev's message to Carter," February 25, 1977.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., "Carter's Message to Brezhnev," March 4, 1977.

<sup>112</sup> For a good account on the lack of empathy on both sides, see Blight and Lang, "When Empathy Failed."

<sup>113</sup> For an excellent documentation on the Kissinger-Dobrynin channel, see the volume *Soviet-American Relations*, edited by Geyer and Selvage. The volume consist of both Kissinger and Dobrynin's notes of their meetings. It was issued by the U.S. Department of State in association with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>114</sup> Harriman and Dobrynin met eight times in November and December 1976 trying to establish a permanent channel. See Library of Congress (LOC), Averell W. Harriman Papers, Box 597, for the notes of these meetings.

the Soviet leadership.<sup>115</sup> Two years after having taken charge, Brzezinski pointed out that he did not believe that “we have yet had a firm and comprehensive ‘heart-to-heart’ talk with them about all of the basic issues that are at stake and about the nature of our long-term relationship.”<sup>116</sup>

Carter’s approach on human rights aggravated the crisis of confidence. The Soviet leadership perceived Carter’s policy as an attempt to teach them how to handle their internal affairs.<sup>117</sup> Used to Kissinger’s power politics, Brezhnev and Gromyko were annoyed by Carter’s drive for human rights. Dobrynin told Harriman that “Moscow was emotional in their doubts what the President’s position really was.” Dobrynin confessed that “there was the worst emotional feeling towards the administration than at any time in the last ten years.”<sup>118</sup> Kissinger and Brzezinski were blowing hot and cold on human rights. Compared to the oscillating U.S. *détente* policies, the West Europeans pursued a more durable approach managing to combine power and mission in their policy toward the Soviet Union. The Geneva negotiations on the CSCE proved that the Soviet Union had eventually been prepared to agree to concessions in terms of human rights, freer movement and to the peaceful change of frontiers as long as they did not perceive a larger degree of self-determination for the nations and citizens of Eastern Europe as a threat to their security.

Cyrus Vance had a lot of sympathy for the dynamic *détente* policy that he himself had begun to pursue in the 1960s when he had served as Deputy Secretary of Defense under Robert McNamara. In 1976, prior to the election, he was convinced that a prospective Carter administration could only work

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<sup>115</sup> Dobrynin complained about the lack of more philosophical discussions in superpower relations. In addition to pure negotiations, Dobrynin wanted the Carter administration to sit down with him or Gromyko and to exchange views on long-term trends and to explain things. See JCL, Donated Historical Materials, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Subject File, Weekly Reports, Box 41, for Brzezinski’s weekly report no. 69 to Jimmy Carter, August 4, 1978.

<sup>116</sup> JCL, Brzezinski Collection, Subject File, Weekly Reports, Box 42, “Brzezinski’s weekly report no. 79 to Jimmy Carter,” November 9, 1978.

<sup>117</sup> Brezhnev rejected Carter’s human rights policy as “pseudo-humanitarian slogans.” He warned Carter that “we shall resolutely respond to attempts of this kind.” See JCL, Brzezinski Collection, Subject Files, Box 18, for Brezhnev’s second letter to Carter, February 25, 1977. Gromyko complained that “whenever the President or someone else in the United States talked about human rights, the Soviet leadership reacted with a conditioned reflex, as it were, waiting for the arrow that would be launched in the direction of the Soviet Union.” See JCL, National Security Affairs 7, Box 35, for “Memcon Carter-Gromyko,” September 23, 1977.

<sup>118</sup> LOC, Harriman Papers, Box 589. “Memcon Harriman-Dobrynin,” March 3, 1978.

for peaceful changes behind the Iron Curtain if “the Russians have nothing to fear from Governor Carter.”<sup>119</sup> Carter himself was also eager to continue détente and to blend together cooperation with demands for improved Soviet human rights practices. In his first letter to Brezhnev, he reiterated that “competition over ideals and ideas is inevitable between our societies.”<sup>120</sup>

Throughout Carter’s presidency, Brzezinski used the human rights issue as a major tool to attack the Soviet Union. Whereas Carter was devoted to the idea of human rights in principle, Brzezinski conceived the topic as an anti-Soviet instrument. The two of them had a shared interest for different reasons. Brzezinski assumed that he could foster liberalizing changes through a policy seeking open confrontation thereby defeating the Soviet Union over the long term. His contempt for the Soviet Union derived from his notion that it was “historically irrelevant, weaker than the West in every aspect, except militarily.”<sup>121</sup> Brzezinski sought to create “a framework within which the Soviet Union can accommodate with us, or face the prospect of isolating itself globally.”<sup>122</sup> This philosophy was at odds with the sustainable policy of peaceful engagement that Johnson had pursued in the 1960s. Brzezinski’s believed that “détente was not a goal in itself.”<sup>123</sup> This assumption contradicted Johnson’s premise that the division of Europe “must be healed with the consent of Eastern European countries and with the consent of the Soviet Union.”<sup>124</sup>

Brzezinski rejected the notion that fruitful East-West competition presupposed a certain degree of cooperation. In 1978, Brzezinski suggested

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<sup>119</sup> This message is the thrust of a think piece that Vance sent Carter through the latter’s adviser Stuart Eizenstat on August 30, 1976. See LOC, Harriman Papers, Box 596.

<sup>120</sup> See JCL, Brzezinski Collection, Subject Files, Box 18, for Carter’s initial letter to Brezhnev, January 26, 1977.

<sup>121</sup> Brzezinski made these remarks in a heated discussion with Finnish Prime Minister Sorsa on November 2, 1978. JCL, National Security Affairs 7.

<sup>122</sup> JCL, Brzezinski Collection, Subject File, Weekly Reports, Box 42. “Brzezinski’s weekly report no. 83 to Jimmy Carter,” December 28, 1978.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., “Brzezinski’s weekly report no. 66 to Jimmy Carter,” July 7, 1978.

<sup>124</sup> Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1966, Vol. 2, 1125–30. Lyndon Johnson’s speech “Making Europe Whole: An Unfinished Task” delivered at the National Conference of Editorial Writers in New York, October 7, 1966. For Johnson’s account, see Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, 474f. Initially, Brzezinski coined the term “peaceful engagement” in a Foreign Affairs article he wrote with William Griffith in 1961. See Brzezinski and Griffith, “Peaceful Engagement.” When Johnson used the term to describe his détente policy in his speech on Europe, Brzezinski worked for the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff and overemphasized his role in the drafting of the speech. See Bator, “Lyndon Johnson.”

that it was beneficial to make progress on arms control dependent from Soviet accommodation in the human rights field.<sup>125</sup> He ignored Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's advice that "the Soviets cannot stand to be visibly defeated."<sup>126</sup> Indeed, Brezhnev's and Gromyko's anger over Carter's human rights campaign was certainly a reason for the Soviets' harsh rebuke of the Carter administration's deep-cuts proposal for the SALT negotiations that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance presented in Moscow in the spring of 1977. Brezhnev's strong rebuttal made the Carter administration return to the Vladivostok formula in the aftermath of Vance's failed mission to Moscow.<sup>127</sup> Eventually, it turned out that both superpowers were able to find a SALT II agreement within two years. Both sides attempted to reach strategic stability regardless of the psychological divide in the Carter-Brezhnev years. However, by 1979, the debates over the so-called grey area weapons such as the Soviet SS-20, Moscow's so-called Backfire bomber (TU-22) and U.S. cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles hung over SALT like a time bomb inextricably ticking. The deployment of the multiple warhead Soviet SS-20 missiles had even exacerbated the domestic uproar against SALT. After all, the SALT II accords perpetuated the Soviet advantage in terms of the missiles' destructive capacity (throw-weight). On December 25, 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, and on January 3, 1980, Carter asked the Senate not to consider SALT II for its advice and consent, and it was never ratified.<sup>128</sup>

### Grey-Area Weapons and the Crisis of Détente

When Carter and Brezhnev met in Vienna to sign the SALT II agreement in June 1979, the SALT process had long been overshadowed by the debate over the "grey-area systems" which had so far not been included in arms control agreements.<sup>129</sup> When Ford and Brezhnev came together in

<sup>125</sup> See JCL, Brzezinski Collection, Subject File, Weekly Reports, Box 41, for Brzezinski's weekly report no. 66 to Jimmy Carter, July 7.

<sup>126</sup> JCL, National Security Affairs 7, Box 33, "Memcon Brzezinski-Giscard," September 26, 1977.

<sup>127</sup> For Vance's account of his mission to Moscow in March 1977, see Vance, "Hard Choices," 53ff.

<sup>128</sup> Nevertheless, the terms of SALT II were honored by both sides. The Reagan administration did not go beyond the limits of SALT II, and neither did the Soviets.

<sup>129</sup> The "grey area" included U.S. cruise missiles and F-111 bombers as well as the Soviet SS-20 and the so-called Backfire Bomber. For the text of Schmidt's "Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture" before the IISS, see *Survival*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2–10. For a good account on Schmidt's thinking, see Wiegrefe, *Das Zerwürfnis*, 159ff.

Vladivostok in November 1974, they agreed to keep the controversial grey-area issue out of SALT II.<sup>130</sup> At the time, Helmut Schmidt started to grow concerned over the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union were eager to limit the number of their strategic weapons whereas the arsenal of nuclear weapons deployed in Europe remained unrestricted.<sup>131</sup> Schmidt feared that U.S. and Soviet decision-makers might be tempted to limit a potential nuclear war to the European battlefield leaving their own territories unaffected.

Schmidt was convinced that the deployment of modernized nuclear weapons in Europe would lead to a “regionalization and categorical limitation of a potential conflict.”<sup>132</sup> In October 1977, he used an address before the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London to highlight the disparities of military power in Europe. He pointed out that strategic arms control must not be limited to the superpowers as this would “inevitably impair the security of the West European members of the Alliance vis-à-vis Soviet military superiority in Europe.”<sup>133</sup> He regretted that “we Europeans did not have a clear enough view of the close connection between parity of strategic nuclear weapons, on the one hand, and tactical nuclear and conventional weapons on the other, or if we did, we did not articulate it clearly enough.”<sup>134</sup>

Schmidt grew concerned about a potential decoupling of Europe’s security because the United States invented ever smaller and ever “cleaner” nuclear weapons such as cruise missiles and the neutron bomb.<sup>135</sup> Nixon’s

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<sup>130</sup> See NARA, RG 59, Sonnenfeldt Files, Box 6, for Memcon Ford-Brezhnev, November 23, 1974. Whereas Ford and Kissinger insisted that the Soviet Backfire bomber should be counted as a heavy bomber, Brezhnev and his advisers were adamant in their demands that the U.S. cruise missiles ought to be counted as single launchers in the overall aggregate.

<sup>131</sup> At his first summit meeting with Brezhnev in October 1974, Schmidt tried to convince Brezhnev that neither side needed that many missiles in Europe as they possessed at the time. See AAPD 1974, 1371ff, for Memcon Schmidt-Brezhnev, October 29, 1974. As Schmidt later observed, in October 1974 Brezhnev did not realize the significance of his concern. See Schmidt, *Menschen und Mächte*, 64.

<sup>132</sup> AAPD 1977, 1329ff., “Letter from Schmidt to Secretary of Defense Georg Leber,” October 6, 1977.

<sup>133</sup> Schmidt’s Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture before the IISS of October 28, 1977, is printed in *Survival*, Vol. XX, No. 1, 2ff.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> In 1975, Henry Kissinger was troubled about “these escalating cruise missiles programs” that he allowed the Pentagon and the Navy to pursue in order to try to undo part of his “MIRV Mistake” that allowed for the Soviet Union’s strategic buildup. On “esca-

and Ford's Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger in particular saw cruise missiles as "a godsend to keep nuclear wars limited to small exchanges."<sup>136</sup> Schlesinger assumed that the old theater nuclear weapons were too inaccurate and too devastating to be used.<sup>137</sup> He considered them "junk."<sup>138</sup> The development of cruise missiles and the production of neutron bombs promised more precise nuclear attacks and limited nuclear options—thereby reducing the threshold to start a nuclear war in Central Europe. Schmidt's concerns grew in the autumn of 1977 when Carter and Gromyko found agreement to allow for the deployment of Air-Launched Cruise Missiles (ALCMs) with less than 600 kilometer range, whereas the United States deferred the deployment of long-range cruise missiles that could reach Soviet territory for three years.<sup>139</sup>

Carter's and Gromyko's deferral made the neutron bomb NATO's main bargaining chip for arms control negotiations in the grey area.<sup>140</sup> In February 1978, Brzezinski's Deputy David Aaron informed NATO's North Atlantic Council that the Carter administration wanted to establish an arms control linkage between the N-Bomb and the Soviet SS-20s. He admitted that "the link between the N-bomb and the SS-20 was not a military one. Rather, it was primarily a matter of psychology. The benefits of this arms control approach were its public appeal, simplicity, its easy verification and its immediate negotiability."<sup>141</sup>

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lating cruise missiles programs," see NARA, RG 59, Sonnenfeldt Files, Box 6, for Kissinger's remarks in a Staff Meeting on SALT, September 19, 1975. In 1973, Kissinger himself recommended to Nixon to preserve the cruise missiles as a strategic option in order to preserve at least the U.S. technological margin. See Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 848. For a recent assessment on the U.S. cruise missiles program, see Nuti, "The Origins of the 1979."

<sup>136</sup> NARA, RG 59, Sonnenfeldt Files, Box 6. This was Sonnenfeldt's assessment in Kissinger's Staff Meeting on SALT, September 19, 1975.

<sup>137</sup> Schlesinger issued the "New Weapons Deployment Policy" (Schlesinger Doctrine) on April 3, 1974. See Burr, "To Have the Only Option."

<sup>138</sup> Schlesinger told Sonnenfeldt and Jan Lodol of the NSC Staff so after an NSC Meeting on MBFR on January 23, 1975. See FRUS 1969–1976, vol. 39, 1052ff., for Editorial Note.

<sup>139</sup> See JCL, National Security Affairs 7, Box 35, for Memcon Carter-Gromyko, September 23, 1977.

<sup>140</sup> Carter agreed to take responsibility for producing the N-bomb and at the same time link his decision with prospective arms control negotiations. See AAPD 1978, 138ff, for Memcon between David Aaron, Brzezinski's Deputy, and Günther van Well, Undersecretary of State in Bonn's Foreign Office, January 30, 1978.

<sup>141</sup> NATO ambassador Pauls' telegram to Bonn's Foreign Office, February 24, 1978, 321ff.



After Carter's surprising decision to postpone the development of neutron bombs in the spring of 1978, NATO established an arms control link between the Soviet SS-20 and the long-range missiles that still were to be produced.<sup>142</sup> In May 1978, however, ACDA Director Warnke warned Schmidt that Western demands for the inclusion of the SS-20 in SALT II would presumably be counteracted by Soviet insistence to cover the French and British nuclear arsenals.<sup>143</sup> Therefore, the grey-area issue was kept out of SALT II.<sup>144</sup> A new forum was needed—however, it still took three years until “Intermediate Nuclear Forces” (INF) negotiations started. The prospects for successful negotiations on the INF were dim.

After Carter had dropped the neutron bomb in the spring of 1978, he was determined to demonstrate his leadership in NATO at the World Economic Summit in Bonn in June 1978. In talking to Callaghan, Giscard, and Schmidt, Carter reiterated his willingness to deploy cruise missiles. He emphasized that recent tests of the long-range missiles with terrestrial navigation proved their “beautiful accuracy.”<sup>145</sup> Brzezinski was anxious that Carter firmly counter European anxieties “that this Administration does not have any overall scheme, and that the U.S. is no longer prepared to use its power to protect its interests and impose its will on the flow of history.”<sup>146</sup> In effect, Carter needed the deployment of the cruise missiles and Pershing II as a means to demonstrate his capability to lead NATO through stormy waters. In October 1978, Brzezinski bluntly told Schmidt that Carter was determined to deploy ground-launched cruise missiles in West Germany until 1985 regardless of public pressure for arms control efforts.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> The neutron bomb was the first weapon specifically intended to kill humans with radiation while preserving property. Jimmy Carter postponed development following widespread protest against his administration's plans to deploy neutron warheads in Europe.

<sup>143</sup> AAPD 1978, 861ff. “Memcon Schmidt-Warnke,” May 31, 1978.

<sup>144</sup> Schmidt was eager to cover French and British nuclear weapons in SALT III, which ought to be a “Euro-SALT.” Talking to French Foreign Minister de Guiringaud, Schmidt stressed that the definition of strategic weapons must not result from their range, but from their effect. Hence, both the Soviet SS-20, French and British nuclear forces as well as the U.S. FBS in Europe had to be included. See AAPD 1978, 927ff, for Memcon Schmidt-de Guiringaud, June 13, 1978.

<sup>145</sup> See AAPD 1978, 1118ff, for Memcon Carter, Callaghan, Giscard, Schmidt, July 19, 1978.

<sup>146</sup> JCL, Brzezinski Collection, Subject File, Weekly Reports, Box 42, “Brzezinski's weekly report no. 83 to Jimmy Carter,” December 28, 1978.

<sup>147</sup> See JCL, National Security Affairs 7, Box 33, for Memcon Brzezinski-Schmidt, October 3, 1978; for the German account, see AAPD 1977, 1451ff. See also AAPD 1979, 12ff., for a German record of the Guadeloupe Summit on January 5–6, 1979.

Schmidt supported NATO's dual-track decision.<sup>148</sup> At the same time, he was eager to start arms control negotiations on the intermediate-range forces in advance of a prospective deployment. Schmidt wanted to avoid the impression that the West wanted to punish the Soviet Union after its invasion in Afghanistan by hastily deploying new missiles in Western Europe. Schmidt was convinced that trade sanctions or an immediate boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow could produce mounting conflicts that could lead to revival of the Cold War. He tried to convince Carter that the West should keep its channels of communication open across the Iron Curtain in order to avoid an escalation of tensions in Europe.<sup>149</sup> Talking to his trusted friend Cyrus Vance, Schmidt made the point that in order to avoid the impression of Western "impotence" the United States might consider getting the Soviets out of African troublespots including Angola, Libya, Ethiopia, or North Yemen.<sup>150</sup>

Schmidt did all he could to protect Ostpolitik from a spillover of tensions. He proposed a freeze on the deployment of intermediate-range missiles for both sides in 1980. In turn, Brzezinski wanted Carter to accuse Schmidt of bad faith and of abandoning the dual-track decision. Brzezinski was determined to postpone a proposal for a freeze until after the deployment of the new Intermediate-Range Forces.<sup>151</sup> In the wake of Afghanistan, both superpowers lacked an interest to start sincere arms control negotiations on the Euromissiles.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> For the ramifications of NATO's Dual-Track Decision for German politics and the rise of the anti-nuclear protest movement in the FRG, see Gassert, Geiger, and Wentker, *Zweiter Kalter Krieg*.

<sup>149</sup> See JCL, National Security Affairs 3, Box 7, for Schmidt's letter to Carter, January 18, 1980; see also Schmidt, *Menschen und Mächte*, 243ff.

<sup>150</sup> See JCL, Brzezinski Collection, Subject Files, Box 20, for Memcon Vance-Schmidt, February 27, 1980.

<sup>151</sup> See JCL, National Security Affairs 3, Box 7, for Memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter with draft of a Carter letter to Schmidt, June 11, 1980; Schmidt received the harsh-worded letter on June 12. Ten days later, Schmidt confronted Carter defending his freeze proposal when they met at the World Economic Summit in Venice. For the German records of their meeting on June 22, 1980, see AAPD 1980, 948ff.

<sup>152</sup> See Talbott, *Deadly Gambits*.

## The Long Détente and the Survival of the US Transformation Policy

The West Europeans were merely bystanders in the accelerating arms race. At the same time, Ostpolitik and the CSCE process promised to give them a say in the future of détente. However, Carter's and Brzezinski's public human rights campaign threatened to jeopardize the bridges of increased contacts across the Iron Curtain. Carter turned the Belgrade CSCE follow-up meeting into an East-West confrontation when he appointed Arthur Goldberg as head of the US delegation. Thus, Carter sacrificed Western solidarity that had always been the prerequisite for NATO's dynamic détente policy in the CSCE. Kissinger had been willing to follow the line of the State Department European Bureau despite his misgivings about the CSCE. In contrast, Carter and Brzezinski ignored the State Department's advice. The advent of the Carter administration brought a new dualism. This time, in contrast to Kissinger's tenure, the bridge-builders in the European Bureau were not able to assert themselves.

Early on, there were rumors that Brzezinski intended to use human rights at the CSCE follow-up meeting as a means to "sandbag" Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.<sup>153</sup> Whereas Vance took into account West European demands for a quiet human rights policy, Brzezinski was eager to confront the Soviet Union more visibly. In the first instance, in the spring of 1977, the French and the West Germans felt reassured by Brzezinski's promises that the White House wanted to avoid turning Belgrade into a confrontation.<sup>154</sup> The Schmidt-Genscher government in particular was keen to keep détente alive.<sup>155</sup> After all, the West Germans managed to expand East-West contacts through quiet diplomacy.

In one of his first conversations with Brzezinski in March 1977, Hans-Dietrich Genscher reiterated that long-term credits and the economic diplomacy of Ostpolitik made the Communist authorities in Poland and in the Soviet Union agree to let 120,000 ethnic Germans emigrate to Germany.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> This was the impression of Olin Robison, the president of Middlebury College and a good friend of Vance and Vest. Robison confined this impression to Albert Sherer on the occasion of a visit to Belgrade. See Yale, Sherer Papers, Box 6, for Sherer's diary entry of June 22, 1977.

<sup>154</sup> When Bahr gave Brzezinski an outline of Bonn's CSCE policy, the latter agreed that "one should avoid turning Belgrade into a forum of accusations," AdSD, Depositum Egon Bahr, Vol. 412 A., "Memcon Brzezinski-Bahr," February 22, 1977.

<sup>155</sup> See Bange, "Keeping détente alive."

<sup>156</sup> JCL, National Security Affairs 7, Box 33, for Memcon Brzezinski-Genscher, March 14, 1977.

Genscher insisted that the FRG wanted “to keep Eastern Europe engaged in a multilateral process and not let Belgrade be an end.”<sup>157</sup> Schmidt and Genscher were determined to get even more people out. Moreover, they wanted to maintain the high level of 7 to 8 million West German visitors travelling to the GDR in 1975 and 1976. Schmidt told Vance that “we cannot talk in abstract terms about human rights.”<sup>158</sup> The objective was to help as many people in Eastern Europe claim their rights. Schmidt and Genscher wanted to achieve “the greatest happiness for the greatest number.”<sup>159</sup>

For the time being Brzezinski reassured Genscher that the United States wanted Belgrade “to be neither a confrontation nor a tribunal.”<sup>160</sup> However, in the first days of the Belgrade negotiations in October 1977, it turned out that the Carter White House and Arthur Goldberg made the first CSCE follow-up meeting the kind of human rights confrontation they had promised to avoid. Jesco von Puttkammer, Bonn’s ambassador to Belgrade, realized that Goldberg subordinated NATO’s solidarity to U.S. domestic yearning for a strong comeback of U.S. values and principles in foreign policy. Von Puttkammer observed that Goldberg “was banging the table [in Belgrade] as soon as he believed to have bad press at home.”<sup>161</sup> Carter, Brzezinski, and Goldberg took an all-or-nothing approach and were prepared to let the Belgrade meeting fail.<sup>162</sup> In these circumstances, the first CSCE Follow-Up could not produce a substantive document. At least, in a last minute effort, the West Europeans managed to negotiate a statement among the thirty-five that expressed the participants’ willingness to meet for another Follow-Up and continue the CSCE process.<sup>163</sup>

In January 1978, the Giscard administration issued the idea to convoke a European Disarmament Conference (EDC) to revive the CSCE process.<sup>164</sup> The West Germans supported the French proposal because it was based on the idea of injecting CBMs from MBFR into the CSCE and expanding the width of the CBMs area covering the entire European part of

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> AAPD 1977, 413ff., “Memcon Schmidt-Vance,” March 31, 1977.

<sup>159</sup> See Bange, “The Greatest Happiness.”

<sup>160</sup> JCL, National Security Affairs 7, Box 33, “Memcon Brzezinski-Genscher,” March 14, 1977.

<sup>161</sup> See AdsD, Willy-Brandt-Archiv (WBA), Record Group 11.1, Vol. 89, for von Puttkammer’s Letter to Brandt, October 25, 1977.

<sup>162</sup> AAPD 1978, 171ff., Memcon Goldberg-Fischer, February 1, 1978.

<sup>163</sup> For the four-page concluding document of the Belgrade CSCE follow-up meeting, see [www.csce.org/documents/mcs/1977/10/4222\\_en.pdf](http://www.csce.org/documents/mcs/1977/10/4222_en.pdf).

<sup>164</sup> See Christian Wenkel’s chapter in this volume.

the Soviet Union up to the Ural Mountains.<sup>165</sup> U.S. reactions to the French proposal differed. Brzezinski wanted to avoid such a project while Soviet troops were still in Afghanistan.<sup>166</sup> Secretary of State Vance backed the French idea. On Genscher's behalf, Vance managed to solicit NATO's support for the EDC project in 1979.<sup>167</sup> Finally, Brzezinski came around and gave Max Kampelman the latitude to support the French proposal. Kampelman, the head of the U.S. delegation to the Madrid follow-up meeting, managed to link his support for the French idea with West European endorsement for a strong U.S. position on human rights.<sup>168</sup> This compromise helped to overcome the transatlantic frictions of the Carter presidency.<sup>169</sup> The Madrid meeting kept détente alive. It helped to establish a pan-European security framework through the CSCE that accompanied the deployment of the Euromissiles in 1983.<sup>170</sup>

The Madrid negotiations also made Ronald Reagan and Brezhnev's successor Yuri Andropov aware that they could do business with each other despite Reagan's infamous depiction of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire." Well before Gorbachev took over in March 1985, Reagan followed the advice of Secretary of State George Shultz and pursued a policy of "realistic re-engagement" toward the Soviet Union.<sup>171</sup> Acknowledging the massive bilateral crisis of confidence, this approach was a serious effort to engage the Soviets on a broad front again. The success of the CSCE follow-up meeting in Madrid and the start of the Stockholm Con-

<sup>165</sup> For an assessment of the French initiative, see Blech's Memorandum of February 1, 1978, in AAPD 1978, 163ff. After the start of the Madrid follow-up meeting, Kampelman urged the newly elected Reagan administration to support this idea. See MHS, Kampelman Papers, Box 15, for Kampelman's Memorandum of January 9, 1981.

<sup>166</sup> See Kampelman, *Entering New Worlds*, 244.

<sup>167</sup> See AAPD 1979, 731ff, for Blech's Report on Genscher's conversation with Vance, May 30, 1979.

<sup>168</sup> See Kampelman, *Entering New Worlds*, 244f.

<sup>169</sup> See Snyder, "The CSCE."

<sup>170</sup> As early as December 1979, Hans-Dietrich Genscher and his French counterpart François Poncet were in agreement that one major task of the Madrid CSCE follow-up meeting was to establish a mandate for a European Conference on Disarmament that was meant to expand the scope of CBM up to the Ural Mountains. See AAPD1979, pp. 1909ff, for Blech's summary of the NATO Ministerial Meeting's session of December 15, 1979.

<sup>171</sup> On "realistic reengagement," see Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 464ff. On January 16, 1984, Ronald Reagan gave a landmark televised speech in order to prepare the U.S. public for his effort to reengage the Soviet Union. See Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, *Ronald Reagan*, 42–44. Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation and Other Countries on the United States-Soviet Relations, January 16, 1984."

ference on CBMs in 1984 Europeanized détente and provided the superpowers a tool to overcome mutual mistrust in their bilateral relations after the temporary suspension of the INF and START negotiations in late 1983 when the first Pershing II missiles were deployed.<sup>172</sup>

The CSCE process played a tremendous role herein.<sup>173</sup> It opened the door for the start of arms control negotiations before Gorbachev arrived on the scene. In March 1983, President Reagan indicated to Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador in Washington, that he would look upon the release of prosecuted Pentecostal Christians from the Soviet Union as an important signal that serious dialogue and improved relations were possible. Since February 1983, Reagan and Andropov had been working on this deal. It finally materialized because the U.S. and Soviet delegation heads at the CSCE follow-up meeting in Madrid had a confidential dialogue on this issue.<sup>174</sup> In July 1983, the Soviets released sixty Pentecostals and let them emigrate. George Shultz perceived the Pentecostal issue as a potential door opener for arms control negotiations. In the spring of 1983, Shultz advised Reagan that “if we are going to pursue this, we have to outline a series of steps that build on each other.” Shultz argued that they needed “to create the right background music on human rights and bilateral issues as precursors to the agenda on arms control and regional issues.”<sup>175</sup>

At the outset of the Stockholm Conference in 1984, Reagan and Shultz started to conceive human rights in the “collective” way focusing on the freer movement of people as a major human right.<sup>176</sup> In his opening statement, Shultz emphasized that the division of the continent was “the essence of Europe’s security and human rights problem, and we all know it.”<sup>177</sup> When Reagan gave his address at the Brandenburg Gate and appealed to Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall in 1987, he picked up the thrust of Johnson’s speech on Europe in October 1966 that was devoted to “making Europe whole” through peaceful engagement and the expansion of East-West contacts.<sup>178</sup>

When Gorbachev entered the scene, Reagan had the counterpart he needed to tackle the unresolved arms control issues. At their initial sum-

<sup>172</sup> See Goodby, “The Stockholm Conference.”

<sup>173</sup> For a most recent account on the CSCE’s relevance, see Selvage, “The Superpowers.”

<sup>174</sup> See Kampelman, *Entering New Worlds*, 269ff.

<sup>175</sup> Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 270.

<sup>176</sup> See Snyder, “The Foundation for Vienna.”

<sup>177</sup> See Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 467f.

<sup>178</sup> For the context of Reagan’s speech at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on June 12, 1987, see Mann, *The Rebellion*, 117ff.

mit in Geneva in November 1985, Reagan and Gorbachev reiterated their willingness to cut the arsenals for strategic weapons by 50 percent and to try to eliminate all intermediate nuclear forces in Europe. Their cutting-edge meeting turned out to be a crucial catalyst for Gorbachev's domestic reforms. This arms control breakthrough enabled Reagan and Shultz to intensify the policy of peaceful engagement toward Eastern Europe. Instead of only rewarding Eastern European states for their efforts to gain more autonomy from Moscow, Reagan and Shultz tried to encourage more independence by moving on whatever front was open to them. They expanded relations with Eastern Europe across the board.

At the outset of Reagan's tenure, the prospects for a long *détente* were dim, though. In the aftermath of the declaration of martial law in Poland, Reagan was out for a "total economic quarantine of the Soviet Union." Moreover, he considered the Helsinki process "null and void." Initially, "no *détente*" was his credo.<sup>179</sup> By contrast, his allies in Europe were eager to keep *détente* alive. It was common sense among the members of the European Community that a potential return to Cold War high tension would stand in the way or even terminate Western efforts to work for liberalizing changes in Eastern Europe.<sup>180</sup>

The Europeans were particularly annoyed by Reagan's plans to abandon the CSCE process and to impose sanctions against the construction of a Soviet natural gas pipeline to Western Europe. Eventually, though, Reagan was not prepared to break with the Europeans. In the fall of 1982, the Madrid CSCE follow-up meeting was continued after a recess of ten months. Particularly U.S. Secretary of State Shultz was aware that it was imperative for the United States to keep *détente* alive in order to be able to deploy the Euromissiles in 1983. It seems that the West Europeans followed Reagan's public human rights diplomacy in the CSCE in return for U.S. concession in terms of the gas pipeline deal. In a nutshell, U.S. and West European policies toward the Warsaw Pact were not always congruent. But NATO's "new consensus" on East-West policy proved that they could be mutually supportive.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Minutes of NSC Meeting, December 21, 1981, in Saltoun-Ebin, Reagan Files, <http://jasonebin.com/nsc34.html>.

<sup>180</sup> Time and again, Schmidt and Genscher reiterated that it was their uppermost interest to prevent a revival of Cold War high tensions in Europe. See for instance, Genscher's encounter with Vice President Bush on March 9, 1982, and Schmidt's conversation with Reagan on June 9, 1982, in AAPD 1982, 390ff., and 922ff.

<sup>181</sup> See Snyder, "The CSCE and the Atlantic Alliance."





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